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WESTERN CLEARINGS.

WESTERN CLEARINGS.

BY

MRS. C. M. KIRKLAND.

AUTHOR OF

"A NEW HOME, WHO 'LL FOLLOW?" "FOREST LIFE," &c.

NEW YORK:
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1845.

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PREFACE.

To write a book is no great matter—as is very evident from the multitudes of books which are written; to write a preface is quite a different thing. It is the very tyranny of fashion that requires something to be said when there is nothing to say. But if one tells one's publisher so, he only says, "Nothing can come of nothing; try again!" and so one is thrust bodily before the public, like the little boy who clings to his mother's apron, and tries to get behind her chair, while all the family cry out at once, "Johnny, make a bow!" and when Johnny makes his bow after much suffering, the company do not even look at him! In this last particular there is a decided affinity between our case and the little boy's, for the public in whose behalf prefaces are insisted upon, very seldom takes the trouble to glance at them after they are written.

Some cynical people may ask why books must be made at all, since to let them alone is the most easy and obvious way of avoiding the difficulties which beset preface-writing. It would require a whole new book fully to answer such an unreasonable question, so numerous are the inevitable causes of book-making. The first reason that might be given is, that when one is born to write, it is *impossible* to refrain; and if this should not be satisfactory, more than the orthodox thirty-nine might be added, each one unanswerable—so we spare

Goodman Dull the specification. For ourselves in this pa ticular case, we might urge that these are *Western* stories– stories illustrative of a land that was once an El Dorado– stories intended to give more minute and life-like represents tions of a peculiar people, than can well be given in a grav straightforward history. To those who left Eastern an civilized homes to try the new Western world, at a perio when every one was mad

With visions prompted by intense desire

after golden harvests, no apology for an attempt to convey fir impressions of so new a state of things will be needed. A tra eller may go to England without finding much that he fee prompted to record for the amusement of friends at home. A most every body has been there before him ; and while the la guage and manners are essentially the same as his own, the p culiarities that may strike him have been already reported often and so well, that even the best sketches seem almost li mere repetitions or *rechauffées* of the observations of othe But the wild West has had few visitors and fewer describe Its history may be homely, but it is original. It is like nothi else in the wide world, and so various that successive trav lers may continue to give their views of it for years to com without fear of exhausting its peculiarities. Language, idea manners, customs—are all new ; yes ! even language ; for the instructed person from one of our great Eastern cities, t talk of the true back-woodsman is scarce intelligible. His ind scribable *twang* is, to be sure, no further from good Engli than the *patois* of many of the English counties. But the West this curious talker is your neighbour and equ while in the elder country he would never come in your w unless you sought him purposely to hear his jargon. And

ideas, the settler has some of the strangest that ever were harboured in human brain, mixed with so much real shrewdness, practical wisdom, and ready wit, that one cannot but wonder how nature and a warping or blinding education can be so at variance.

As to the ordinary manners of the back-woodsman, not a word can be said in their favour. They are barbarous enough. Yet he is a gentle creature in sickness; and when death comes to the family of a friend or neighbour, his whole soul is melted, and his manners could not be amended by false Chesterfield himself. A delicacy not always found among the elegant, will then temper his every look and movement to the very tone of the time. And for substantial kindness at such seasons—but I have tried to say what I thought of that, elsewhere.

The customs of the West are such as might naturally be expected to grow up among a most heterogeneous population, contriving to live under the pressure of extreme difficulties, and living not in the present but in the future. This is the condition of shifts and turns—"expedients and inventions multiform;" encroachments, substitutes, borrowings; public spirit and individual selfishness; a feeling of common interest, conflicting strangely with an entire readiness to flit with the first offer of "a trade;" neighbourly kindness struggling against the necessity of looking out sharply for number one. That this combination,—or rather the combination of which the particulars enumerated are but a symbol,—should afford amusing materials for one's sketch-book, is a matter of course. How to refrain, in cases where to tell would be to infringe upon neighbourly comity, is the only difficulty. And indeed, to tell at all, in however general terms, is considered as doing this; since what may be said of

one settlement applies to so many others, that all one's care does not suffice to avoid the appearance of particularity. It is a well-known fact that certain sketches of Western life have been appropriated by more than a dozen communities, each declaring them personal; while their sole personality lay in the attempt to adhere closely to the *general*, to the entire exclusion of the particular.

The papers included in the present collection were all written at the West, and I may say with Goldsmith, "they certainly were new when they were written." Further claims to originality most of them have not. Yet there is reason to believe, after all the efforts made to instruct and delight the people of these United States of Alleghania by Magazine and Annual stories, very many of them still remain beyond the pale; and might never acquire this part of their equipment for the journey of life, if it were not for occasional reprints like those of the present series.

Besides these echoes of the past, we entreat the reader to believe that there is much of new, and (of course) good, to be found in the following pages. We entreat him to *believe* this, at least; and that kindly faith will help to give a grace to what might else have but slender pretensions to his favour.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
The Land-Fever	1
Ball at Thram's Huddle	15
A Forest Fete	27
Love *vs.* Aristocracy	35
Harvest Musings	57
The Bee-Tree	66
Idle People	87
Changes and Changes	94
Ambuscades	118
Old Thoughts on the New Year	144
The Schoolmaster's Progress	153
Half-Lengths from Life	168
An Embroidered Fact	194
Bitter Fruits from Chance-sown Seeds	205

WESTERN CLEARINGS.

THE LAND-FEVER.

THE wild new country, with all its coarseness and all its disadvantages of various kinds, has yet a fascination for the settler, in consequence of a certain free, hearty tone, which has long since disappeared, if indeed it ever existed, in parts of the country where civilization has made greater progress. The really fastidious, and those who only pretend to be such, may hold this as poor compensation for the many things lacking of another kind; but those to whose apprehension sympathy and sincerity have a pre-eminent and independent charm, prefer the kindly warmth of the untaught, to the icy chill of the half-taught; and would rather be welcomed by the woodsman to his log-cabin, with its rough hearth, than make one of a crowd who feed the ostentation of a *millionaire*, or gaze with sated eyes upon costly feasts which it would be a mockery to dignify with the name of hospitality. The infrequency of inns in a newly settled country leads naturally to the practice of keeping "open house" for strangers; and it is rare indeed that the settler, however poor his accommodations, hesitates to offer the best he has to the tired wayfarer. Where payment is accepted, it is usually very inconsiderable; and it is seldom accepted at all, unless the guest is manifestly better off than his entertainer. But whether a compensation be taken or refused, the heartiness of manner with which every thing that the house affords is offered, cannot but be acceptable to the visitor. Even the ever rampant pride, which comes up so disagreeably at the West, where the outward appearance of the stranger betokens any advantage of condition, slumbers when that stranger claims hospitality. His horse is cared for with

more solicitude than the host ever bestows on his own; the table is covered with the best provisions the house affords, set forth in the holiday dishes; the bed is endued with the brightest patch-work quilt—the pride of the housewife's heart; and if there be any fat fowls—any white honey—any good tea—about the premises, the guest will be sure to have it, even though it may have been reserved for "Independence" or "Thanksgiving."

This habit was however reversed, or at least suspended, during the speculating times. The country was then inundated with people who came to buy land,—not to clear and plough, but as men buy a lottery-ticket or dig for gold—in the hope of unreasonable and unearned profits. These people were considered as public enemies. No personal violence was offered them, as might have been the case at the Southwest; but every obstacle, in the shape of extravagant charges, erroneous information, and rude refusal, was thrown in their way. Few were discouraged by this, however; for they came in the spirit of the knights of romance when they had to enter enchanted castles—strong in faith of the boundless treasures which were to reward their perseverance.

To mislead an unpractised land-hunter was a matter of no great difficulty; for few things are more intricate and puzzling, at first, than the system which has been devised to facilitate the identifying of particular spots. Section-corners and quarter-stakes, eighties, and forties, and fractions, are plain enough when one is habituated to them, and they *seem* plain enough to the new man,—on paper. But when he finds himself in the woods, with his maps and his copious memoranda, he is completely at sea, with no guide but the compass. A friend who afterwards became quite a proficient in the mysteries of land-finding tells me that he twice lost himself completely in the woods. "The first time," he says, "my mishap was owing to the wandering habits of a wild Indian pony which I had chosen on account of his power of ceaseless travel. He had been accustomed to pick up his living where he could find it, and he took advantage of my jogging pace, just at dusk, when I did not feel *too* certain of my whereabout, to quit the scarce-defined road, in search of something tempting which he espied at a distance. My

resource in this case was to abandon my horse, and fix my eyes on the North Star, which I knew would bring me to a certain State road, in due time. The other occasion was in broad daylight, but when there was only an occasional gleam of sunshine, so that I had no steady guide as to direction. The ground was so thickly strown with leaves that my horse's hoofs left no permanent track, and I found myself in a complete maze. The trees were all alike to my bewildered eyes (I had left my compass at the last lodging-place,); and all I knew was that I was south of the road which I had quitted for the sake of saving some miles' distance. After many efforts at marking trees—very ineffectual without an axe—I bethought me of a newspaper, which I tore into pieces and affixed to bushes and low limbs as I went, and so obtained a straight line; by which means, after some hours' rather anxious wandering, I was finally extricated."

To pass a night in the woods is a small affair for a hunting party; but it is something quite different for a solitary individual, unprovided with axe or gun, and, of course, unable to make himself comfortable in any way. To sleep in a tree might do, if trees were not occasionally haunted by wild cats; or a lair in the heaped leaves of autumn, if there were not a chance of warming into activity a nest of rattlesnakes. These are no doubt partly useless fears, but to the stranger they are very real; and they tend not a little to the increase of his difficulties by discomposing his nerves when cool reflection would be his best friend.

Mistakes in "locating" land were often very serious, even where there had been no intention to deceive—the purchaser finding only swamp or hopeless gravel, when he had purchased fine farming land and maple timber. Every mile square is marked by blazed trees, and the corners especially distinguished by stakes whose place is pointed out by trees called Witness-trees, and so accurate and so minute is the whole system that it seems almost incredible that so many errors should have arisen. The backwoodsman made no mistakes, for to him a stump, or a stone, or a prostrate tree, has individuality; and he will never confound it with any other. One accustomed to wandering in the woods will know even the points of the compass, in a strange place, without sun or star to guide him. But the fact of the unwillingness of

the actual settler to guide the speculator faithfully, became so well known, that purchasers often preferred relying on their own sagacity, backed by what seemed unmistakable rules, to trusting such disaffected guides. Innumerable stories are current in the woods of the perplexities of city gentlemen;—and the following, if not strictly true, will serve to illustrate somewhat the state of things in those wild times when sober prudence was forgotten, and delusion ruled the hour. I shall call it, for want of better title,

A REMINISCENCE OF THE LAND-FEVER.

THE years 1835 and 1836 will long be remembered by the Western settler—and perhaps by some few people at the East, too—as the period when the madness of speculation in lands had reached a point to which no historian of the time will ever be able to do justice. A faithful picture of those wild days would subject the most veracious chronicler to the charge of exaggeration; and our great-grand-children can hope to obtain an adequate idea of the infatuation which led away their forefathers, only by the study of such detached facts as may be noted down by those in whose minds the feeling recollection of the delusion is still fresh. Perhaps when our literary existence shall have become sufficiently confirmed to call for the collection of Ana, something more may be gleaned from the correspondence in which were embodied the exultings of the successful, and the lamentations of the disappointed.

"Seeing is believing," certainly, in most cases; but in the days of the land-fever, we, who were in the midst of the infected district, scarcely found it so. The whirl, the fervour, the flutter, the rapidity of step, the sparkling of eyes, the beating of hearts, the striking of hands, the utter *abandon* of the hour, were incredible, inconceivable. The "man of one idea" was every where: no man had two. He who had no money, begged, borrowed, or stole it; he who had, thought he made a generous sacrifice, if he lent it at cent per cent. The tradesman forsook his shop; the farmer his plough; the merchant his counter; the lawyer his office; nay, the minister his desk, to join the general chase. Even the

schoolmaster, in his longing to be "abroad" with the rest, laid down his birch, or in the flurry of his hopes, plied it with diminished unction.

> "Tramp! tramp! along the land they rode,
> Splash! splash! along the sea!"

The man with one leg, or he that had none, could at least get on board a steamer, and make for Chicago or Milwaukie; the strong, the able, but above all, the "enterprising," set out with his pocket-map and his pocket-compass, to thread the dim woods, and see with his own eyes. Who would waste time in planting, in building, in hammering iron, in making shoes, when the path to wealth lay wide and flowery before him?

A ditcher was hired by the job to do a certain piece of work in his line. "Well, John, did you make any thing?"

"Pretty well; I cleared about two dollars a day: but I should have made more by *standing round;*"* i. e., watching the land-market for bargains.

This favourite occupation of all classes was followed by its legitimate consequences. Farmers were as fond of "standing round" as any body; and when harvest time came, it was discovered that many had quite forgotten that the best land requires sowing; and grain, and of course other articles of general necessity, rose to an unprecedented price. The hordes of travellers flying through the country in all directions were often cited as the cause of the distressing scarcity; but the true source must be sought in the diversion, or rather suspension, of the industry of the entire population. Be this as it may, of the wry faces made at the hard fare, the travellers contributed no inconsiderable portion; for they were generally city gentlemen, or at least gentlemen who had lived long enough in the city to have learned to prefer oysters to salt pork. This checked not their ardour, however; for the golden glare before their eyes had power to neutralize the hue of all present objects. On they pressed, with headlong zeal: the silent and pathless forest, the deep miry marsh, the gloom of night, and the fires of noon, beheld alike the march of

* Verbatim.

the speculator. Such searching of trees for town lines! Such ransacking of the woods for section corners, ranges, and base lines! Such anxious care in identifying spots possessing particular advantages! And then, alas! after all, such precious blunders!

These blunders called into action another class of operators, who became popularly known as "land-lookers." These met you at every turn, ready to furnish "water-power," "pine lots," "choice farming tracts," or any thing else, at a moment's notice. Bar-rooms and street-corners swarmed with these prowling gentry. It was impossible to mention any part of the country which they had not personally surveyed. They would tell you, with the gravity of astrologers, what sort of timber predominated on any given tract, drawing sage deductions as to the capabilities of the soil. Did you incline to city property? Lo! a splendid chart, setting forth the advantages of some unequalled site, and your confidential friend, the land-looker, able to tell you more than all about it, or to accompany you to the happy spot; though that he would not advise; "bad roads," "nothing fit to eat," etc.; and all this from a purely disinterested solicitude for your welfare.

These amiable individuals were, strange to tell, no favourites with the actual settlers. If they disliked the gentleman speculator, they hated with a perfect hatred him who aided by his local knowledge the immense purchases of non-residents. These short-sighted and prejudiced persons forgot the honour and distinction which must result from their insignificant farms being surrounded by the possessions of the magnates of the land. They saw only the solitude which would probably be entailed on them for years; and it was counted actual treason in a settler to give any facilities to the land-looker, of whatever grade. "Let the land-shark do his own hunting," was their frequent reply to applications of this kind; and some thought them quite right. Yet this state of feeling among the Hard-handed, was not without its inconvenient results to city gentlemen, as witness the case of our friend Mr. Willoughby, a very prim and smart bachelor, from ———

It was when the whirlwind was at its height, that a gentleman wearing the air of a bank-director, at the very least—in other

words, that of an uncommonly fat pigeon—drew bridle at the bars in front of one of the roughest log houses in the county of ———. The horse and his rider were loaded with all those unnecessary defences, and cumbrous comforts, which the fashion of the time prescribed in such cases. Blankets, valise, saddle-bags, and holsters nearly covered the steed; a most voluminous enwrapment of India-rubber cloth completely enveloped the rider. The gallant sorrel seemed indeed fit for his burden. He looked as if he might have swam any stream in Michigan

> "Barded from counter to tail,
> And the rider arm'd complete in mail;"

yet he seemed a little jaded, and hung his head languidly, while his master accosted the tall and meagre tenant of the log cabin.

This individual and his dwelling resembled each other in an unusual degree. The house was, as we have said, of the roughest; its ribs scarcely half filled in with clay; its "looped and windowed raggedness" rendered more conspicuous by the tattered cotton sheets which had long done duty as glass, and which now fluttered in every breeze; its roof of oak shingles, warped into every possible curve; and its stick chimney, so like its owner's hat, open at the top, and jammed in at the sides; all shadowed forth the contour and equipments of the exceedingly easy and self-satisfied person who leaned on the fence, and snapped his long cart-whip, while he gave such answers as suited him to the gentleman in the India-rubbers, taking especial care not to invite him to alight.

"Can you tell me, my friend,——" civilly began Mr. Willoughby.

"Oh! *friend!*" interrupted the settler; "who told you I was your friend? Friends is scuss in these parts."

"You have at least no reason to be otherwise," replied the traveller, who was blessed with a very patient temper, especially where there was no use in getting angry.

"I don't know that," was the reply. "What fetch'd you into these woods?"

"If I should say 'my horse,' the answer would perhaps be as civil as the question."

"Jist as you like," said the other, turning on his heel, and walking off.

"I wished merely to ask you," resumed Mr. Willoughby, talking after the nonchalant son of the forest, "whether this is Mr. Pepper's land."

"How do you know it an't mine?"

"I'm not likely to know, at present, it seems," said the traveller, whose patience was getting a little frayed. And taking out his memorandum-book, he ran over his minutes: "South half of north-west quarter of section fourteen——Your name is Leander Pepper, is it not?"

"Where did you get so much news? You a'n't the sheriff, be ye?"

"Pop!" screamed a white-headed urchin from the house, "Mam says supper's ready."

"So ain't I," replied the papa; "I've got all my chores to do yet." And he busied himself at a log pig-stye on the opposite side of the road, half as large as the dwelling-house. Here he was soon surrounded by a squealing multitude, with whom he seemed to hold a regular conversation.

Mr. Willoughby looked at the westering sun, which was not far above the dense wall of trees that shut in the small clearing; then at the heavy clouds which advanced from the north, threatening a stormy night; then at his watch, and then at his note-book; and after all, at his predicament—on the whole, an unpleasant prospect. But at this moment a female face showed itself at the door. Our traveller's memory reverted at once to the testimony of Ledyard and Mungo Park; and he had also some floating and indistinct poetical recollections of woman's being useful when a man was in difficulties, though hard to please at other times. The result of these reminiscences, which occupied a precious second, was, that Mr. Willoughby dismounted, fastened his horse to the fence, and advanced with a brave and determined air, to throw himself upon female kindness and sympathy.

He naturally looked at the lady, as he approached the door, but she did not return the compliment. She looked at the pigs, and talked to the children, and Mr. Willoughby had time to ob-

serve that she was the very duplicate of her husband; as tall, as bony, as ragged, and twice as cross-looking.

"Malviny Jane!" she exclaimed, in no dulcet treble, "be done a-paddlin' in that 'ere water! If I come there, I'll——"

"You'd better look at Sophrony, I guess!" was the reply.

"Why, what's she a-doin'?"

"Well, I guess if you look, you'll see!" responded Miss Malvina, coolly, as she passed into the house, leaving at every step a full impression of her foot in the same black mud that covered her sister from head to foot.

The latter was saluted with a hearty cuff, as she emerged from the puddle; and it was just at the propitious moment when her shrill howl aroused the echoes, that Mr. Willoughby, having reached the threshold, was obliged to set about making the agreeable to the mamma. And he called up for the occasion all his politeness.

"I believe I must become an intruder on your hospitality for the night, madam," he began. The dame still looked at the pigs. Mr. Willoughby tried again, in less courtly phrase.

"Will it be convenient for you to lodge me to-night, ma'am? I have been disappointed in my search for a hunting-party, whom I had engaged to meet, and the night threatens a storm."

"I don't know nothin' about it; you must ask the old man," said the lady, now for the first time taking a survey of the new comer; "with *my* will, we'll lodge nobody."

This was not very encouraging, but it was a poor night for the woods; so our traveller persevered, and making so bold a push for the door that the lady was obliged to retreat a little, he entered, and said he would await her husband's coming.

And in truth he could scarcely blame the cool reception he had experienced, when he beheld the state of affairs within those muddy precincts. The room was large, but it swarmed with human beings. The huge open fire-place, with its hearth of rough stone, occupied nearly the whole of one end of the apartment; and near it stood a long cradle, containing a pair of twins, who cried—a sort of hopeless cry, as if they knew it would do no good, yet could not help it. The schoolmaster, (it was his week,) sat reading a tattered novel, and rocking the cradle occasionally, when

the children cried *too* loud. An old grey-headed Indian was curiously crouched over a large tub, shelling corn on the edge of a hoe; but he ceased his noisy employment when he saw the stranger, for no Indian will ever willingly be seen at work, though he may be sometimes compelled by the fear of starvation or the longing for whiskey, to degrade himself by labour. Near the only window was placed the work-bench and entire paraphernalia of the shoemaker, who in these regions travels from house to house, shoeing the family and mending the harness as he goes, with various interludes of songs and jokes, ever new and acceptable. This one, who was a little, bald, twinkling-eyed fellow, made the smoky rafters ring with the burden of that favourite ditty of the west:

> "All kinds of game to hunt, my boys, also the buck and doe,
> All down by the banks of the river O-hi-o;"

and children of all sizes, clattering in all keys, completed the picture and the concert.

The supper-table, which maintained its place in the midst of this living and restless mass, might remind one of the square stone lying bedded in the bustling leaves of the acanthus; but the associations would be any but those of Corinthian elegance. The only object which at that moment diversified its dingy surface was an iron hoop, into which the mistress of the feast proceeded to turn a quantity of smoking hot potatoes, adding afterward a bowl of salt, and another of pork fat, by courtesy denominated gravy: plates and knives dropped in afterward, at the discretion of the company.

Another call of "Pop! pop!" brought in the host from the pigstye; the heavy rain which had now began to fall, having no doubt, expedited the performance of the chores. Mr. Willoughby, who had established himself resolutely, took advantage of a very cloudy assent from the proprietor, to lead his horse to a shed, and to deposit in a corner his cumbrous outer gear; while the company used in turn the iron skillet which served as a wash-basin, dipping the water from a large trough outside, overflowing with the abundant drippings of the eaves. Those who had no pocket-handkerchiefs, contented themselves with a nondescript article

which seemed to stand for the family towel; and when this ceremony was concluded, all seriously addressed themselves to the demolition of the potatoes. The grown people were accommodated with chairs and chests; the children prosecuted a series of flying raids upon the good cheer, snatching a potato now and then as they could find an opening under the raised arm of one of the family, and then retreating to the chimney corner, tossing the hot prize from hand to hand, and blowing it stoutly the while. The old Indian had disappeared.

To our citizen, though he felt inconveniently hungry, this primitive meal seemed a little meagre; and he ventured to ask if he could not be accommodated with some tea.

"An't my victuals good enough for you?"

"Oh!—the potatoes are excellent, but I'm very fond of tea."

"So be I, but I can't have every thing I want—can you?"

This produced a laugh from the shoemaker, who seemed to think his patron very witty, while the schoolmaster, not knowing but the stranger might happen to be one of his examiners next year, produced only a faint giggle, and then reducing his countenance instantly to an awful gravity, helped himself to his seventh potato.

The rain which now poured violently, not only outside but through many a crevice in the roof, naturally kept Mr. Willoughby cool; and finding that dry potatoes gave him the hiccups, he withdrew from the table, and seating himself on the shoemaker's bench, took a survey of his quarters.

Two double-beds and the long cradle, seemed all the sleeping apparatus; but there was a ladder which doubtless led to a lodging above. The sides of the room were hung with abundance of decent clothing, and the dresser was well stored with the usual articles, among which a tea-pot and canister shone conspicuous; so that the appearance of inhospitality could not arise from poverty, and Mr. Willoughby concluded to set it down to the account of rustic ignorance.

The eating ceased not until the hoop was empty, and then the company rose and stretched themselves, and began to guess it was about time to go to bed. Mr. Willoughby inquired what was to be done with his horse.

"Well! I s'pose he can stay where he is."

"But what can he have to eat?"

"I reckon you won't get nothing for him, without you turn him out on the mash."

"He would get off, to a certainty!"

"Tie his legs."

The unfortunate traveller argued in vain. Hay was "scuss," and potatoes were "scusser;" and in short the "mash" was the only resource, and these natural meadows afford but poor picking after the first of October. But to the "mash" was the good steed despatched, ingloriously hampered, with the privilege of munching wild grass in the rain, after his day's journey.

Then came the question of lodging for his master. The lady, who had by this time drawn out a trundle-bed, and packed it full of children, said there was no bed for him, unless he could sleep "up chamber" with the boys.

Mr. Willoughby declared that he should make out very well with a blanket by the fire.

"Well! just as you like," said his host; "but Solomon sleeps there, and if you like to sleep by Solomon, it is more than *I* should."

This was the name of the old Indian, and Mr. Willoughby once more cast woful glances toward the ladder.

But now the schoolmaster, who seemed rather disposed to be civil, declared that he could sleep very well in the long cradle, and would relinquish his place beside the shoemaker to the guest, who was obliged to content himself with this arrangement, which was such as was most usual in those times.

The storm continued through the night, and many a crash in the woods attested its power. The sound of a storm in the dense forest is almost precisely similar to that of a heavy surge breaking on a rocky beach; and when our traveller slept, it was only to dream of wreck and disaster at sea, and to wake in horror and affright. The wild rain drove in at every crevice, and wet the poor children in the loft so thoroughly, that they crawled shivering down the ladder, and stretched themselves on the hearth, regardless of Solomon, who had returned after the others were in bed.

But morning came at last; and our friend, who had no desire farther to test the vaunted hospitality of a western settler, was not among the latest astir. The storm had partially subsided; and although the clouds still lowered angrily, and his saddle had enjoyed the benefit of a leak in the roof during the night, Mr. Willoughby resolved to push on as far as the next clearing, at least, hoping for something for breakfast besides potatoes and salt. It took him a weary while to find his horse, and when he had saddled him, and strapped on his various accoutrements, he entered the house, and inquired what he was to pay for his entertainment—laying somewhat of a stress on the last word.

His host, nothing daunted, replied that he guessed he would let him off for a dollar.

Mr. Willoughby took out his purse, and as he placed a silver dollar in the leathern palm outspread to receive it, happening to look toward the hearth, and perceiving the preparations for a very substantial breakfast, the long pent-up vexation burst forth.

"I really must say, Mr. Pepper——" he began: his tone was certainly that of an angry man, but it only made his host laugh.

"If this is your boasted western hospitality, I can tell you——"

"You'd better tell me what the dickens you are peppering me up this fashion for! My name isn't Pepper, no more than yours is! May be that *is* your name; you seem pretty warm."

"Your name not Pepper! Pray what is it, then?"

"Ah! there's the thing now! You land-hunters ought to know sich things without asking."

"Land-hunter! I'm no land-hunter!"

"Well! you're a land-shark, then—swallowin' up poor men's farms. The less I see of such cattle, the better I'm pleased."

"Confound you!" said Mr. Willoughby, who waxed warm, "I tell you I've nothing to do with land. I wouldn't take your whole state for a gift."

"What did you tell my woman you was a land-hunter for, then?"

And now the whole matter became clear in a moment; and it was found that Mr. Willoughby's equipment, with the mention of a "hunting party," had completely misled both host and hostess.

And to do them justice, never were regret and vexation more heartily expressed.

"You needn't judge our new-country folks by me," said Mr. Handy, for such proved to be his name; "any man in these parts would as soon bite off his own nose, as to snub a civil traveller that wanted a supper and a night's lodging. But somehow or other, your lots o' fixin', and your askin' after that 'ere Pepper—one of the worst land-sharks we've ever had here—made me mad; and I know I treated you worse than an Indian."

"Humph!" said Solomon.

"But," continued the host, "you shall see whether my old woman can't set a good breakfast, when she's a mind to. Come, you shan't stir a step till you've had breakfast; and just take back this plaguey dollar. I wonder it didn't burn my fingers when I took it!"

Mrs. Handy set forth her very best, and a famous breakfast it was, considering the times. And before it was finished, the hunting party made their appearance, having had some difficulty in finding their companion, who had made no very uncommon mistake as to section corners and town-lines.

"I'll tell ye what," said Mr. Handy, confidentially, as the cavalcade with its baggage-ponies, loaded with tents, gun-cases, and hampers of provisions, was getting into order for a march to the prairies, "I'll tell ye what; if you've occasion to stop any where in the Bush, you'd better tell 'em at the first goin' off that you a'n't land-hunters."

But Mr. Willoughby had already had "a caution."

BALL AT THRAM'S HUDDLE.

THE winter being a time of comparative leisure for the farmer and his family, is generally the chosen period for regular, premeditated amusements, such as dancing, seeing "shows," and going to school;—this last being considered only fit to fill up spare time of such young people as are old enough to do any thing "useful." A ball on Christmas or New-Year night, or in commemoration of Jackson's victory, or Washington's birth, is always in order; as those eras happen all to occur in the depth of winter. And the raree-shows which traverse the remoter parts of the country, almost invariably offer their attractions about the same period, their owners knowing very well that the farmer never feels so generous or so jovial as when his crops are all safely housed, and his wheat in the ground for next year's harvest.

These exhibitions are a rich treat, sometimes; not only to those who gaze upon them in good faith, but to the cooler spectator, employed rather in watching the company than the performers. I remember one, the *matériel* of which was a Lecture on Astronomy, with Orrery and Tellurium, (grand-sounding amusements for the woods!) a model of Perkins' steam gun, and a Magic Lantern. The master of ceremonies (feeling very little ceremony himself,) went about quite coolly, with his hat on and a segar in his mouth, marshalling the company, and ordering the boys to make themselves as small as they could, in order that he might the more easily get round to take up a contribution before the "exercises" began. The fee, being left to the generosity of the spectators, was not very burthensome in collecting; and the orator declared before he began the lecture, that he had not received enough to pay for the candles—of which, by the bye, there were only four, for an audience of nearly an hundred people. This moved a good woman on one of the back seats so deeply, that she asked him to

wait a minute, and then passed a sixpence, along a line of ready hands, to the rostrum, where the pathetic speaker, after first examining it on both sides by the nearest candle, put it in his pocket, and then, with a more contented air, ordered the music to begin. The violin accordingly struck up a lively tune, to which all the male part of the audience kept time with their feet; and the lecture, thus gilded over like a bitter pill, began. But such a lecture! It was read off by rote, the reader evidently knowing no more of his subject than of Hebrew, and having merely garbled from some dull treatise, an incomprehensible jumble of facts and theories that would have puzzled Sir John Herschel in the disentangling. The effect of such "amusement" on such an audience may easily be imagined. Some yawned, some nodded, and some went fairly and audibly to sleep. In vain the four candles were snuffed—in vain the lecturer told his audience that he was "just going to bite off"—they evidently began to wish their sixpences back in their pockets, when the lecturer finished and the violin was heard once more. This crisped the spirits of the company admirably, and the most curious blundering expositions of the Orrery and Tellurium found tolerably willing ears. The showman had wisely put the worst first; and now having done with the stars, he came to the steam gun, which took very well; the alcohol burning properly blue, and the reports being managed with the gentleness of any sucking dove.

But the cream of the night was the Magic Lantern, which had at least the merit of being suited to the apprehension of the auditory; its grotesque figures and frightful goblins possessing, too, the additional advantage of being set off by the operator's wit. The extinguishment of the lights set all the babies crying at once; but the violin, or some panacea discovered by the mammas, quieted them after a while; and we saw "the ghost that scared London for twenty years" roll his eyes horribly, and were told by the operator that that was the way the young men cast sheep's eyes when they went a-sparking. This idea created a laugh of course, which seemed a happy relief to some of the spectators, who had begun to feel very squeamish at the sight of a ghost. The night-mare, and several other engaging physiognomies, were still to come, and after all was over, in spite of desperate jokes, some

of the ladies declared audibly as they went out, that they did not expect to sleep a wink all night. Yet they were doubtless sure not to miss the next exhibition of the same kind.

The only exception to the choice of winter for regular amusements, is the ball on Independence night, or rather day, for we take time by the forelock. In the sketch which follows, I have endeavoured to give an idea of one of these; but it must be understood that the description applies to a newly settled part of the country, far from the vicinity of any large town.

It was on the sultriest of all melting afternoons, when the flies were taking an unanimous siesta, and the bees, baked beyond honey or humming, swung idly on the honeysuckles, that I observed, with half-shut eye, something like activity among the human butterflies of our most peaceful of villages. If I could have persuaded myself to turn my head, I might doubtless have ascertained to what favoured point were directed the steps (hasty, considering all things,) of the Miss Liggits, Miss Pinn, and my pretty friend, Fanny Russell; but the hour was unpropitious to research, and slumber beguiled the book from my fingers, before the thought "Where *can* they be going!" had fairly passed through my mind. Fancy had but just transported me to the focus of a circle of glass-blowers, the furnace directly in front, and the glowing fluid all round me, when I was recalled to almost equally overcoming realities, by a light tap at the door. I must have given the usual invitation mechanically, for before I was fairly awake, the pink face of one of my own hand-maidens shone before my drowsy eyes.

"If you don't want me for nothin', I'd like to go down to the store to get some notions for the ball."

"The ball! what! a red-hot ball!" I replied, for the drowsy influence was settling over me again, and I was already on the deck of a frigate, in the midst of a sharply-contested action.

"Massy no, marm! this here Independence ball up to Thram's Huddle," said Jane, with a giggle.

I was now wide awake with astonishment. "A dance, Jane, in such weather as this!"

"Why law! yes; nothin' makes a body so cool as dancin' and drinkin' hot tea."

This was beyond argument. Jane departed, and I amused myself with the flittings of gingham sun-bonnets and white aprons up and down the street, in the scorching sun.

It was waxing toward the tea-hour, when that prettiest of Fannies, Fanny Russell, her natural ringlets of shadowy gold, which a duchess might envy, looking all the richer under the melting influence of the time, came tripping into the little porch.

"If you *would* be so kind as to lend me that large feather fan; I would take such good care of it! It's for the ball."

Sweet Fanny! one must be churlish indeed, to deny thee a far greater boon!

Next came that imp, Ring Jones; but he goes slyly round to the kitchen-door, with an air of great importance. Presently, enter Jane.

"Ring Jones has brought a kind of a bill, marm, for our Mark; and Mark ain't to hum, and Ring says he can't go without an answer."

"But I cannot answer Mark's billets, you know, Jane."

"No, marm; but—this 'ere is something about the *team*, I guess."

And in the mean time Jane had, *sans ceremonie*, broken the wafer, and was spelling out the contents of Mark's note.

"I can't justly make it out; but I know it's something about the *team;* and they want an answer right off."

Thus urged, I took the note, which was after this fashion:

"The agreeable Cumpany of Mr. Mark Loring and Lady is requested to G Nobleses Tavern to Thram's huddle Independence the 4th July."

And here followed the names of some eight or ten managers.

"But, Jane, here's nothing about the team, after all."

"Jist look o' t'other side, marm; you see they didn't want to put it right in the ticket, like."

Upon this hint, I discerned, in the extreme corner of the paper, a flourish which might be interpreted "over." Over I went accordingly, and there came the gist of the matter.

"Mark we want to hav you be ready with your Team at one

o'clock percisely to escort the ladies if you can't let us know and don't forgit to Put in as many Seats as you can and All your Buffaloes."*

I ventured to promise that the team, and the seats, and the buffaloes, should be at Mark's disposal at "one percisely," and Ring Jones departed, highly exalted in his own opinion, by the success of his importunity.

It was to be supposed that we had now contributed our quota of aid on this patriotic occasion; but it seemed that more was expected. The evening was far advanced, when the newly-installed proprietor of the half-finished "hotel" at Thram's Huddle, alighted at our door; and, wiping his dripping brow, made known the astounding fact that he had scoured the country for dried apples, without success, and informed us that he had come, as a *dernier resort*, to beg the loan of some; "for," as he sensibly observed, "a ball without no pies, was a thing that was never heerd on, no wheres."

When this matter was settled, he mustered courage to ask, in addition, for the great favour of a gallon of vinegar, for which he declared himself ready to pay any price; "that is, any thing that was reasonable."

I could not refrain from inquiring what indispensable purpose the vinegar was to serve.

"Why, for the lettuce, you see!—and if it's pretty sharp, it 'll make 'em all the spryer."

Mr. Noble departed, in a happy frame of mind, and we heard no more of the ball that night.

The next day, the eldest Miss Liggitt "jist called in," as she happened to be passing, to ask if I was "a-goin' to want that 'ere flowery white bunnet-curting" of mine.

Some time ago I might not have comprehended that this description applied to a blonde-gauze veil, which had seen its best days, and was now scarce presentable. It did not require any great stretch of feminine generosity to lend this; but when it came to "a pair of white lace gloves," I pleaded poverty, and got off.

* It may be necessary to inform the civilized reader, that the use of buffalo robes in July, is to serve the purpose of cushions, and not of wrappers.

Our Jane, who is really quite a pretty girl, though her hair be of the sandiest, and her face and neck, at this time of the year, one continuous freckle, had set her heart upon a certain blue satin ribbon, which she did not like exactly to borrow, but which she had none the less made up her mind to have, for the grand occasion. So she began, like an able tactician, by showing me one of faded scarlet, on which she requested my opinion.

"Don't you think this'll look about right?"

"That horrid thing! No, Jane, pray don't be seen in that!"

"Well! what kind o' colour *do* you think would look good with this belt?" holding up a cincture, blue as the cloudless vault above us.

"Blue, or white; certainly not scarlet."

"Ah! but I ha'n't got neither one nor t'other;" and she looked very pensive.

I was hard-hearted, but Jane was not without resource.

"If you'd a-mind to let me have that 'ere long blue one o' your'n: you don't never wear it, and I'd be willin' to pay you for't.

Who could hold out? The azure streamer became Jane's, in fee simple.

Spruce and warm looked our good Mark, in his tight blue coat, with its wealth of brass buttons, his stock five fathoms —I mean inches—deep, and his exceeding square-toed boots, bought new for this very solemnity. And a proud and pleased heart beat in his honest bosom, I doubt not, as he drove to the place of rendezvous, buffaloes and all, with cerulean Jane at his side, a full half hour before the appointed time. They need not have cautioned Mark to be "percise." For my part, I longed for "the receipt of fern-seed to walk invisible," or some of those other talismans which used in the good old times to help people into places where they had no business to be; and in this instance, the Fates seemed inclined to be propitious, in a degree at least.

The revellers had scarcely passed on the western road in long and most rapid procession—the dust they raised had certainly not subsided—when a black cloud, which had risen stealthily while all were absorbed in the outfit, began to unfold its ominous shroud. The fringes of this portentous curtain scarcely passed the zenith, when a low, distant muttering, and a few scattering but

immense drops, gave token of what was coming; and long ere the gay *cortége* could have reached the Huddle, which is fully six miles distant, a heavy shower, with thunder and lightning accompaniments, must have made wet drapery of every damsel's anxiously elaborate ball-dress. Beaver and broad-cloth might survive such a deluge, but alas for white dresses, long ringlets, and blonde-gauze "bunnet-curtings!"

The shower was too violent to last, and when it had subsided, and all was

> "Fresh as if Day again were born,
> Again upon the lap of Morn,"

I fortunately recollected an excellent reason for a long drive, ("man is his own Fate,") which would bring us into the very sound of the violins of the Huddle. A young woman who had filled the very important place of "help" in our family, was lying very ill at her father's; and the low circumstances of her parents made it desirable that she should be frequently remembered by her friends during her tedious illness. So in a light open wagon, with a smart pony, *borrowed* for the nonce, *selon les regles*, we had a charming drive, and moreover, the much-coveted pleasure of seeing the heads of the assembled company at Mr. Noble's; some bobbing up and down, some stretched far out of the window, getting breath for the next exercise, and some, with bodies to them, promenading the hall below. I tried hard to distinguish the "belle chêvelure" of my favourite Fanny Russell, or the straight back and nascent whiskers of our own Mark; but we passed too rapidly to see all that was to be seen, and in a few moments found ourselves at the bars which led to the forlorn dwelling of poor Mary Anne Simms.

The only apartment that Mr. Simms' log-hut could boast, was arranged with a degree of neatness which made a visitor forget its lack of almost all the other requisites for comfort; and one corner was ingeniously turned into a nice little room for the sick girl, by the aid of a few rough boards eked out by snow-white curtains. I raised the light screen, and what bright vision should meet my eyes, but the identical Fanny, for whom I had looked in vain among the bobbing heads at the Huddle. She was

whispering kindly to Mary Anne, whose pale cheek had acquired something like a flush, and her eyes a decided moisture, from the sense of Fanny's cheering kindness.

Fanny explained very modestly: "I was so near Mary Anne, and I didn't know when I should get time to come again——"

"Didn't you get wet, coming over?"

"Not so *very*: we—we had an umbrella."

I remembered having lent one to Mark.

"But you are losing the ball, Fanny; you'll not get your share of the dancing." And at this moment I heard a new step in the outer part of the room, and a very familiar voice just outside the curtain:

"Come, Miss Russell, isn't it about time to be a-goin'? There's another shower a-comin' up."

Fanny started, blushed, and took leave. Common humanity obliged us to give time for a retreat, before we followed; for we well knew that our very precise Mr. Loring would not have been brought face to face with us, just then, for the world. When we did emerge, the sky was threatening enough, and as there was evidently no room for us where we were, we had no resource but to make a rapid transit to Mr. Noble's. We gained the noisy shelter just in time. Such a shower!—and it proved much more pertinacious than its predecessor; so that I had the pleasure of sitting in "Miss Nobleses" kitchen for an hour or more. We were most politely urged to join the festivities which were now shaking the frail tenement almost to dislocation; but even if we had been ball-goers, we should have been strikingly *de trop*, where the company was composed exclusively of young folks. So we chose the kitchen.

The empress of this torrid region, a tall and somewhat doleful looking dame, was in all the agonies of preparation; and she certainly was put to her utmost stretch of invention, to obtain access to the fire-place, where some of the destined delicacies of the evening were still in process of qualification, so dense was the crowd of damp damsels, who were endeavouring in various ways to repair the cruel ravages of the shower. One "jist wanted to dry her shoes;" another was dodging after a hot iron, "jist to rub off her hankercher;" while others were taking turns in pinching

with the great kitchen tongs the long locks which streamed, Ophelia-like, around their anxious faces. Poor "Miss Nobles" edged, and glided, and stooped, among her humid guests, with a patience worthy of all praise; supplying this one with a pin, that with a needle-and-thread, and the other with one of her own side-combs; though the last mentioned act of courtesy forced her to tuck behind her ear one of the black tresses which usually lay coiled upon her temple. In short, the whole affair was a sort of prelibation of the Tournament, saving that *my* Queen of Beauty and Love was more fortunate than the Lady Seymour, in that her *coiffure* is decidedly improved by wet weather, which is more than could probably be said of her ladyship's.

At length, but after a weary while, all was done that could be done toward a general beautification; and those whose array was utterly beyond remedy, scampered up stairs with the rest, wisely resolving not to lose the fun, merely because they were not fit to be seen.

The dancing now became "fast and furious," and the spirit of the hour so completely aroused that thirst for knowledge which is slanderously charged upon my sex as a foible, that I hesitated not to slip up stairs, and take advantage of one of the various knot-holes in the oak boards which formed one side of the room, in order that a glimpse of something like the realities of the thing might aid an imagination which could never boast of being "all compact." It was but a glimpse, to be sure, for three candles can do but little toward illuminating a long room, with dark brown and very rough walls; but there was a tortuous country-dance, one side quivering and fluttering in all the colours of the rainbow, the other presenting more nearly the similitude of a funeral; for our beaux, in addition to the solemn countenances which they think proper to adopt on all occasions of festivity, have imbibed the opinion that nothing but broad-cloth is sufficiently dignified wear for a dance, be the season what it may. And there were the four Miss Liggets, Miss Mehitable in white, Miss Polly Ann in green, Miss Lucindy in pink, and Miss Olive all over black-and-blue, saving the remains of the blonde-gauze veil, which streamed after her like a meteor, as she *galoped* "down the middle." My own Jane was playing off her most

recherchées graces at the expense of the deputy sheriff, who seemed for once caught, instead of catching; and to my great surprise, Fanny Russell, evidently in the pouts, under cover of my fan, was enacting the part of wall-flower, while Mark leaned far out of the window, at the risk of taking an abrupt leave of the company.

Peeping is tiresome. I was not sorry when the dance came to an end, as even country-dances must; and when I had waited to see the ladies arranged in a strip at one end of the room, and the gentlemen in ditto at the other, and old Knapp the fiddler testing the absorbent powers of a large red cotton handkerchief upon a brow as thickly beaded as the fair neck of any one of the nymphs around him, (and some of them had necklaces which would have satisfied a belle among our neighbours, the Pottowatomies,) I ran down stairs again, to prepare for our moonlight flitting.

Mrs. Noble now renewed her entreaties that we would at least stay for supper; and in the pride of her heart, and the energy of her hospitality, she opened her oven-door, and holding a candle that I might not fail to discern all its temptations, pointed out to me two pigs, a large wild turkey, a mammoth rice-pudding, and an endless array of pies of all sizes; and these she declared were "not a beginning" of what was intended for the "refreshment" of the company. A cup-board was next displayed, where, among custards, cakes, and "saase," or preserves, of different kinds, figured great dishes of lettuce, "all ready, only jist to pour the vinegar and molasses over it," bowls of large pickled cucumbers, and huge pyramids of dough-nuts. But we continued inexorable, and were just taking our leave, when Fanny Russell, her pretty eyes overflowing and her whole aspect evincing the greatest vexation and discomposure, came running down stairs, and begged we would let her go home with us.

"What *can* be the matter, Fanny!"

"Oh, nothing! nothing at all! But—I want to go home."

It is never of much use advising young girls, when they have made up their minds to be foolish; yet I did just call my little favourite aside, and give her a friendly caution not to expose herself to the charge of being rude or touchy. But this brought

only another shower of tears, and a promise that she would tell me all about it; so we took her in and drove off.

I could not but reflect, as we went saunteringly home, enjoying the splendour of the moonlight, and the delicious balminess of that "stilly hour," how much all balls are alike. Here had been all the solicitude and sacrifice in the preparation of costume; all the effort and expense in providing the refreshments; for the champagne and ices, the oysters and the perigord pies, are no more to the pampered citizen, than are the humbler cates we have attempted to enumerate, to the plain and poor back-woodsman; then here was the belle of the evening, in as pretty a paroxysm of insulted dignity, as could have been displayed on the most classically-chalked floor; and, to crown all, judging from past experience in these regions, some of the "gentlemen" at least would, like their more refined prototypes, vindicate their claims to the title, by going home vociferously drunk. We certainly are growing very elegant.

Fanny's explanation was deferred, at her own request, until the following morning; and long before she made her promised visit, Jane, who came home at day-light, and only allowed herself a change of dress before she entered soberly upon her domestic duties, had disclosed to me the mighty mystery. It had been the opinion of every body, Jane herself included, (a little green-eyed, I fancy,) that Fanny and Mark had gone off to Squire Porter's and got married, under cover of the visit to poor Mary Anne. This idea once started, the beaux and belles, not better bred than some I have seen elsewhere, had not suffered the joke to drop, but pushed their raillery so far, that Fanny had fairly given up and run away, while Mark, however well pleased in his secret soul, had thought it necessary to be very angry, and to throw out sundry hints of "thrashing" some of the stouter part of the company. The peace had not actually been broken, however; and when I saw and talked with Fanny, the main difficulty seemed to relate to the future course of conduct to be observed toward Mark, who, as Fanny declared, with another sprinkling of tears, had "never thought of saying such a word to her in his life!"

Women are excellent manœuverers generally, but we were outdone here. All our dignified plans for acting "as if nothing

had happened," were routed by a counter scheme of Mark himself, who, before the week was out, not only said "such a word," but actually persuaded Fanny to think that the best of all ways to disprove what had been said, was to go to Squire Porter's, and make it true; which was accordingly accomplished, within the fortnight.

"And what for no?" Mark Loring, with a very good-looking face, and a person "as straight as a gun-barrel" (to borrow a favourite comparison of his own,) has the wherewithal to make a simple and industrious country maiden very comfortable. He has long been earning, by the labour of his hands, far better pay than is afforded to our district schoolmaster; and with the well-saved surplus has purchased a small farm, which he and his pretty wife are improving with all their might. No more balls for my bright-haired neighbour, or her sober spouse! And if I should tell my honest sentiments, I should say "so much the better!" for in the hastening of the happy marriage of Mark and Fanny, may be summed up all the good which I have yet observed to result from the ball at Tham's Huddle, or any other in our vicinity.

A FOREST FÊTE.

A LESS common and natural accompaniment of our national holiday is a party of pleasure, or some device to pass the day in quiet amusement, instead of the noisy demonstrations which seem to serve as a safety-valve for the exuberance of animal spirits so habitually repressed throughout the United States during the remainder of the year. Gunpowder in unpractised hands is the cause of so much evil, and its natural friend and ally, whiskey, so inimical to peace and good order, that it is an object of no small solicitude to the soberer classes in the new country to devise some mode of celebrating "Independence" that shall not end in bloodshed and mortal quarrels. A Sunday school celebration—one on a large scale, that should bring children and parents, from far and near, to hear addresses, sing songs, and enjoy a rustic feast under a long bower of fresh branches, was tried one year; but the opposition of the powder party was so bitter that very little was gained in the way of peace, although perhaps some broken bones and blistered faces were saved. Even on that occasion, however, I recollect that a son of one of our neighbours, attempting to blow off some scattered grains of coarse powder from near the touch-hole of the one-pounder that was fired all day by the opposition, suddenly found the whole of it—the powder, not the gun—firmly imbedded in his face, just beneath the skin; and although his mother picked out many grains with her needle, and others made their own way out by suppuration, he will still carry to his grave such a curiously tattooed physiognomy as will serve to remind him of the glorious Fourth, let his lot be cast where it may.

Another device for the more refined enjoyment of the day was a pic-nic party, such as is here sketched under the title of a Forest Fête. This sketch is not to be received as *history* any more than

many others of a similar tone. Real occurrences are introduced, but fancy and general recollections furnished the warp into which such scraps of truth are woven—characteristic correctness being the only aim.

If there be any feeling in the American bosom which may be considered a substitute for that "loyalty" of which the renowned Captain Hall so pathetically notices the lamentable lack, it is the enthusiasm which is annually rekindled, even in the most utilitarian and dollar-worshipping souls among us, by the return of "Independence day." The first sign of the dawning of this virtue is discoverable in the *penchant* of our younglings for Chinese crackers, and indeed gunpowder in any form, always evinced during the last days of June and the opening ones of July; a season in which he whose pockets will hold money, must be either more or less than boy. And as "the child is father of the man," the passion for showing joy and gratitude through the medium of gunpowder seems to increase and strengthen with every recurrence of our national festival, till as much "villanous saltpetre" is expended on a single celebration as would have sufficed our revolutionary forefathers to win a pitched battle. The gentler sex, partaking, by sympathy at least, in the excitement of the time, yet exhibit their patriotism by less noisy demonstrations: by immeasurable pink ribbons; by quadruple consumption of sugar candy; by patient endurance of unmerciful spouting; by unwearied running after the "trainers," and shrill and pretty shrieking at the popping; and sometimes, in primitive and unsophisticated regions, by getting up parties of pleasure, with the aid of such beaux as they can inveigle from amusements better suited to the dignity of the sex, such as drinking, scrub-racing; firing salutes from hollow logs, or blacksmiths' anvils; playing "fox-and-geese" for sixpences; or shooting at a turkey tied to a post, at a shilling the chance.

One particular Independence day not many years sinsyne is memorable in our village annals. It was probably owing to the fact that gunpowder was not very abundant, that some of the élite of the settlement proposed a select pic-nic, to be held on the shore of a beautiful, lonely sheet of water, which having nothing else to do, reflects the flitting clouds at no great distance from our

clearing. A famous time it was, and a still more famous one it would have been, but for an idea which sprang up among certain of our rural exclusives, that it was ungenteel to appear pleased with what delighted others. I say "sprang up," because I feel assured that our fashionables had never even read of the airs of their thorough-bred prototypes; and from a retrospect of the whole affair, I am convinced that the human mind has a natural tendency toward exclusiveism. This effort at superior refinement, with some slight mistakes and disappointments, clouded somewhat the enjoyment of the occasion; but on the whole, the affair went off at least as well as such preconcerted pleasures do elsewhere. Mr. Towson and Mr. Turner, to be sure —— But let us begin at the beginning.

Nothing could have been more auspicious than our outset. All the good stars seemed in conjunction for once, and their kindly influence lent unwonted lustre to the eyes of the ladies and the boots of the gentlemen. Every body felt confident that every thing had been thought of; nobody could recollect any body that *was* any body, who had not been included in the "very select" circle of invitation. Plenty of "teams" had been engaged—for who thinks of ploughing or haying on Independence day?—all the whips were provided with red snappers, and cockades and streamers of every hue decorated the tossing heads of our gallant steeds. Indeed, to do them justice, the horses seemed as much excited as any body. Provant in any quantity, from roast-pig, (the peacock of all our feasts,) to custards, lemonade, and green tea, had been duly packed and cared for. Music had not been forgotten, for one of the party played the violin *à merville*, to the extent of two country dances and half a quadrille, while another beau was allowed to be a "splendid whistler," and a third, who had cut his ankle with a scythe, and could not dance, had borrowed the little triangle from the hotel, which we all agreed to look upon as a tambourine when it should mark the time for the dancers, and a gong when employed in its more accustomed office of calling the hungry to supper. So we were unexceptionably provided for at all points.

The day was such as we often have during the warm months —the most delicious that can be imagined. From the first

pearly streak of dawn, to the last fainting crimson of a Claude sunset, no cloud was any where but where it should have been, to enhance the intensity of a blue that was truly "Heaven's own"—inimitable, unapproachable by any effort of human art. A light crisping breeze ruffled the surface of the lake, whose shaded borders furnished many a swelling sofa of verdant turf for the loungers, as well as a wide and smooth area for the exertions of the nimble-footed. Here we alighted; here were our shining steeds tethered among the oak bushes to browse, to their very great satisfaction; our flags were planted, and, to omit nothing appropriate to the occasion, our salute was fired, with the aid of what a young lady who went into becoming hysterics declared to be a six-pounder, but which proved on inquiry to be only a horse-pistol; our belle refusing to be convinced, however, on the ground that she had heard a six-pounder go off at Detroit, and certainly ought to know. "*Quelle imagination!*"—as a French gentleman of our acquaintance used to exclaim admiringly, when his children perpetrated the most elaborate and immeasurable fibs—"quelle imagination!"

When this was over, Mr. Towson, a very tall and slender young gentleman, who is considered (and I believe not without reason,) a promising youth, proposed reading the Declaration of Independence, and had drawn out his pocket-handkerchief for the purpose, observing very appositely that if it had not been for that declaration we should never have been keeping Independence on the shores of Onion Lake, when he was voted down; every body talking at once, to make it clear that a sail on the said lake ought to precede the reading. Mr. Towson assented with the best grace he could muster, to a decision that reduced him, for the present at least, to a place in the ranks, and offering his arm to Miss Weatherwax, an imaginative young lady, a belle from a rival village, he attempted with a very gallant air to lead the way to the larger of the two boats provided for our accommodation. Now it so happened that this said large boat, having a red handkerchief displayed aloft, had been by common consent styled "the Commodore;" and these advantages being considered, it may readily be inferred that each and every individual who meant to "tempt the waves" had secretly resolved to secure a

seat in it. But as the unlucky beau urged his fair companion forward, another, who had been deeply engaged with two of our own belles in the discussion of a paper of sweeties, observing a movement toward the beach, was on the alert in an instant, and with a lady on each arm, made first way to the Commodore; all scattering sugar-plums as they went, to serve as a clue to those who might choose to follow in their wake. Not among these was the spirited Mr. Towson. He declared that the other boat would be far pleasanter, and Miss Weatherwax being quite of his opinion, he led her to the best (*i. e.* the driest) seat in it, and procured a large green branch, which he held over her by way of parasol, or rather awning. The company in general now followed, taking seats, since the *ton* was thus divided, in either boat, as choice or convenience dictated. All seemed very well, though this was in fact the beginning of an unfortunate split, which from that moment divided our company into parties; the largest, viz., that which took possession of "the Commodore," claiming of course to be the orthodox, or regular line, while the other was considered only an upstart, or opposition concern. The latter, as usual, monopolized the wit. They amused themselves by calling the exclusives "squatters," "prëemptioners," &c., and reiterated so frequently their self-congratulations upon having obtained seats in the smaller craft, that it might be shrewdly guessed they wished themselves any where else.

The sail was long and hot, especially to the excluded; for the Commodore having made at once for a narrow part of the lake, shaded by overhanging trees, and enjoying the advantage of a breeze from the south, dignity required that the other boat should take an opposite course. It accordingly meandered about under the broiling sun, until the reflection from the water had baked the ladies' faces into a near resemblance to that of the rising harvest moon; these very ladies, with the heroic self-devotion of martyrs, declaring they never had so pleasant a sail in their lives.

Meanwhile, those of us whom advanced years or soberer taste disposed rather to tea and talk than to songs and sailing, were busily engaged in arranging to the best advantage the variety of good things provided for the refreshment of the company. This proved by no means so easy a task as the uninitiated may sup-

pose. Our party, which was originally to have been a small one, had swelled by degrees to something like forty persons, by the usual process of adding, for various good reasons, people who were at first voted out. No agreement having been entered into as to the classification of the articles to be furnished by each, it proved, on unpacking the baskets, that there had been an inconvenient unanimity of taste in the selection. At least one dozen good housewives had thought it like enough every body would forget butter; so that we had enough of a fluid article so called, to have smoothed the lake in case of a tempest. Then we had dozens and dozens of extra knives and forks, and scarce a single spoon; acres of pie with very few plates to eat it from; tea-kettles and tea-pots, but no cups and saucers. The young men with a never-to-be-sufficiently-commended gallantry, had provided good store of lemons, which do not grow in the oak-openings; but alas! though sugar was reasonably abundant, we searched in vain for any thing which would answer to hold our sherbet, and all the baskets turned out afforded but six tumblers.

These and similar matters were still under discussion, and much ingenuity had been evinced in the suggestion of substitutes, when one of the boating parties announced its return by the discharge of the same piece of ordnance which had frightened Miss Weatherwax from her propriety, on our arrival. We now hastened our preparation for the repast, and some of the gentlemen having procured some deliciously cool water from a spring at a little distance, and borrowed a large tin pail and sundry other conveniences from a lady whose log-house showed picturesquely from the depths of the wood, the lemonade was prepared, and all things declared ready. But the other boat, the opposition line, as it was denominated in somewhat pettish fun, still kept its distance. Handkerchiefs were waved; the six-pounder horse-pistol went off with our last charge of powder; but the "spunky" craft still continued veering about, determined neither to see nor hear our signals. It was now proposed that we should proceed without the seceders, but to this desperate measure the more prudent part of the company made strenuous objection. So we waited with grumbling politeness till it suited the left branch of our troop to rejoin us, which gave time to warm the lemonade and cool the tea. We

tried to look good-humoured or indifferent; but there were some on whose unpliant brows frowns left their trace, though smiles shone faint below. The late arrival laughed a good deal; quite boisterously, we thought, and boasted what a charming time they had.

"Had *you* any music?" asked Mr. Towson of Mr. Turner, the hero of the Commodore's crew, with an air of friendly interest.

"No," said the respondent, taken by surprise.

"Ah! there now! what a pity! I wish you had been near us, that you might have had the benefit of ours! The ladies sang 'Bonnie Doon,' and every thing; and 'I see them on their winding way;' and —— it went like ile, Sir."

"'Winding way!' you might have seen yourselves on your winding way, if you'd been where we was!" said the rival beau, with an air of deep scorn. "What made you go wheeling about in the sun so?"

"Fishing, Sir—the ladies were a-fishing, Sir!"

"Fishing! Did you catch any thing?"

"No, Sir! we did not catch any thing! We did not wish to catch any thing! We were fishing for amusement, Sir!"

"Oh!—ah! fishing for amusement, eh!"

But here the call to the banquet came just in time to stop the fermentation before it reached the acetous stage, and brows and pocket-kerchiefs were smoothed as we disposed ourselves in every variety of Roman attitude, and some that Rome in all her glory never knew, reclining round the long-drawn array of table-cloths upon whose undulating surface our multitudinous refreshment was deployed. Shawls, cloaks, and buffalo-robes formed our couches—giant oaks our pillared roof. We had tin pails and cups to match, instead of vases of marble and goblets of burning gold. But nobody missed these imaginary advantages. Talk flagged not, as it is apt to do amid scenes of cumbrous splendour, and the merry laugh of the young and happy rang far through the greenwood, unrestrained by the fear of reproof or ridicule. Exclusiveism and all its concomitants were forgotten during tea-time.

When the repast was finished, the sun was far on his downward way, and the esplanade which had been selected as the ballroom was well shaded by a clump of trees on its western border.

Thitherward all whose dancing days were not over, turned with hasty steps, and Mr. Kittering's violin might be heard in various squeaks and groans, giving token of the onset. But we listened in vain for farther demonstrations. No "Morning Star"—no "Mony-Musk"—no "Poule," or "Trenise" delighted the attendant echoes. Debate, warm and rapid, if not loud and angry, seemed to leave no chance for sweeter sounds. The morning's feud between Towson and Turner had broken out with fresh acrimony, when places were to be claimed for the dance. Hard things were said, and harder ones looked, on both sides; and in conclusion, Mr. Towson again marched magnanimously off the field, and contented himself with the sober glory of reading the Declaration to a select audience; while the Commodore's crew, victorious as before, through superior coolness, got up a dance, and had the violin and triangle all to themselves.

The moon rose full and ruddy before we were packed in our wagons to return. The tinkling of bells through the wood, the ceaseless note of the whip-poor-will, the moaning of the evening wind, the chill of a heavy dew, all fraught with associations of repose, gradually quieted the livelier members of the party, and put the duller or the more fatigued fairly asleep. Some of the jokers remained untameable for awhile. The young ladies kept up a little whispering and a great deal of giggling among themselves, and the word "Commodore" was so frequently audible, that one might have thought they were talking of the last war. Mr. Turner drove so closely upon the vehicle in which Mr. Towson occupied the back seat, as to bring his horses' heads unpleasantly near the new hat of that gentleman.

"Hallo! Turner! your horses will be biting me next!" said Mr. Towson, rather querulously.

"Don't be afraid; they don't like such lean meat."

"I should think by their looks they'd be glad of any thing to eat!" said Towson.

"Oh! you mus'n't judge them by yourself," replied Turner, coolly; "they get plenty to eat, every day."

Even this sharp shooting subsided after a while, and before we alighted, unbroken silence had settled upon the entire *cortêge*. But the pic-nic afforded conversation for a month, and every body agreed in thinking we had had a charming "Independence."

LOVE *vs.* ARISTOCRACY.

THE great ones of the earth might learn many a lesson from the little. What has a certain dignity on a comparatively large scale, is so simply laughable when it is seen in miniature, (and, unlike most other things, perhaps, its real features are better distinguished in the small), that it must be wholesome to observe how what we love appears in those whom we do not admire. The monkey and the magpie are imitators; and when the one makes a thousand superfluous bows and grimaces, and the other hoards what can be of no possible use to him, we may, even in those, see a far off reflex of certain things prevalent among ourselves. Next in order come little children; and the boy will put a napkin about his neck for a cravat, and the girl supply her ideal of a veil by pinning a pocket handkerchief to her bonnet, while we laugh at the self-deception, and fancy that *we* value only realities. But what affords us most amusement, is the awkward attempt of the rustic, to copy the airs and graces which have caught his fancy as he saw them exhibited in town; or, still more naturally, those which have been displayed on purpose to dazzle him, during the stay of some "mould of fashion" in the country. How exquisitely funny are his efforts and their failure! How the true hugs himself in full belief that the gulf between himself and the *pseudo* is impassable! Little dreams he that his own ill-directed longings after the *distingué* in air or in position seem to some more fortunate individual as far from being accomplished as those of the rustic to himself, while both, perhaps, owe more to the tailor and milliner than to any more dignified source.

The country imitates the town, most sadly; and it is really melancholy, to one who loves his kind, to see how obstinately people will throw away real comforts and advantages in the vain

chase of what does not belong to solitude and freedom. The restraints necessary to city life are there compensated by many advantages resulting from close contact with others; while in the country those restraints are simply odious, curtailing the real advantages of the position, yet entirely incapable of substituting those which belong to the city.

Real refinement is as possible in the one case as in the other. Would it were more heartily sought in both!

In the palmy days of alchemy, when the nature and powers of occult and intangible agents were deemed worthy the study of princes, the art of sealing hermetically was an essential one; since many a precious elixir would necessarily become unmanageable and useless if allowed to wander in the common air. This art seems now to be among the lost, in spite of the anxious efforts of cunning projectors; and at the present time a subtle essence, more volatile than the elixir of life—more valuable than the philosopher's stone—an invisible and imponderable but most real agent, long bottled up for the enjoyment of a privileged few, has burst its bounds and become part of our daily atmosphere. Some mighty sages still contrive to retain within their own keeping important portions of this treasure; but there are regions of the earth where it is open to all, and, in the opinion of the exclusive, sadly desecrated by having become an object of pursuit to the vulgar. Where it is still under a degree of control, the seal of Hermes is variously represented. In Russia, the supreme will of the Autocrat regulates the distribution of the "airy good:" in other parts of the Continent, ancient prescription has still the power to keep it within its due reservoirs. In France, its uses and advantages have been publicly denied and repudiated; yet it is said that practically every body stands open-mouthed where it is known to be floating in the air, hoping to inhale as much as possible without the odium of seeming to grasp at what has been decided to be worthless. In England we are told that the precious fluid is still kept with great solicitude in a dingy receptacle called Almack's, watched ever by certain priestesses, who are self-consecrated to an attendance more onerous than that

required for maintaining the Vestal fire, and who yet receive neither respect nor gratitude for their pains. Indeed, the fine spirit has become so much diffused in England that it reminds us of the riddle of Mother Goose—

> **A house-full, a hole-full,**
> **But can't catch a bowl-full.**

If such efforts in England amuse us, what shall we say of the agonized pursuit every where observable in our own country? We have denounced the fascinating gas as poisonous—we have staked our very existence upon excluding it from the land, yet it is the breath of our nostrils—the soul of our being—the one thing needful—for which we are willing to expend mind, body, and estate. We exclaim against its operations in other lands, but it is the purchaser decrying to others the treasure he would appropriate to himself. We take much credit to ourselves for having renounced what all the rest of the world were pursuing, but our practice is like that of the toper who had forsworn drink, yet afterward perceiving the contents of a brother sinner's bottle to be spilt, could not forbear falling on his knees to drink the liquor from the frozen hoof-prints in the road; or that other votary of indulgence, who, having once had the courage to pass a tavern, afterward turned back that he might "treat resolution." We have satisfied our consciences by theory; we feel no compunction in making our practice just like that of the rest of the world.

This is true of the country generally; but it is nowhere so strikingly evident as in these remote regions which the noise of the great world reaches but at the rebound—as it were in faint echoes; and these very echoes changed from their original, as Paddy asserts of those of the Lake of Killarney. It would seem that our *elixir vitæ*—a strange anomaly—becomes stronger by dilution. Its power of fascination, at least, increases as it recedes from the fountain head. The Russian noble may refuse to let his daughter smile upon a suitor whose breast is not covered with orders; the German dignitary may insist on sixteen quarterings; the well-born Englishman may sigh to be admitted into a coterie not half as respectable or as elegant as the one to which

he belongs—all this is consistent enough; but we *must* laugh when we see the managers of a city ball admit the daughters of *wholesale* merchants, while they exclude the families of merchants who sell at *retail;* and still more when we come to the "new country" and observe that Mrs. Penniman, who takes *in* sewing, utterly refuses to associate with her neighbour Mrs. Clapp, because she goes *out* sewing by the day; and that our friend Mr. Diggins, being raised a step in the world by the last election, signs all his letters of friendship, "D. Diggins, Sheriff."

There is Persis Allen, the best and the prettiest girl to be found within a wide belt of forest, must be quite neglected by the leaders of the *ton* among us, because she goes out to spin, in order to help her "unlucky" father. Not that spinning is in itself considered vulgar—far from it! Flocks are but newly introduced among us, and all that relates to them is in high vogue; but going out! there is the rub! Persis might have lounged about at home, with her hair uncombed and her shoes down at heel, only "helping" some neighbour occasionally for a short time to earn a new dress,—without losing caste. But to engage herself as a regular drudge, to spin day after day in old Mr. Hicks' great upper chamber all alone, and never have time or finery to go to a ball or a training—she must be a poor, mean-spirited creature, not fit to associate with "genteel" people.

The father of Persis is a blacksmith, and an honest and worthy man, but he is one of those who are described in the country as having "such bad luck!" When he first came into the wilds, he put a sum of money that constituted his all, in a handkerchief about his head, and then swam over a deep and rapid river, because he was too intent on pursuing his journey to await the return of a boat which had just left the shore. He saved his hour, but lost the price of his land; and so was obliged to run in debt for a beginning. During the haying of his first western summer he was too ardent in his endeavours to retrieve his loss to allow himself a long rest at noon, as the other mowers did; and the consequence was an attack of fever which put him still further back in the world. Once more at work, and no less determined than before, he employed his leisure time in assisting the neighbours in the heavy and dangerous business of "logging;"

and once more "unlucky," he attempted to stop by his single arm a log which threatened to roll down a slope, and the next moment he lay helpless with a dislocated shoulder and a hand so mashed that it was long doubtful whether it would ever regain its powers.

All through these disasters his faithful help-meet struggled on, enfeebled by ague, and worn with nursing and watching and pitying her husband. Early and late—out of doors and within—she was at work, endeavouring to preserve a remnant from the general wreck, aided and cheered by her eldest daughter, who, like many children so situated, became prematurely thoughtful and laborious, and seemed never to have known the careless joyousness of childhood. At length Mrs. Allen took a heavy cold in searching all the evening for her cow, through grass and bushes dripping with dew, and she was seized with a rheumatism which made a cripple of her, just as her husband was able to go to his forge again. So our pretty Persis seemed, as I have said, born the "predestined child of care," but she held the blessed place of comforter, and that consciousness can throw somewhat of an angelic radiance over even the face of care. She looked neither pale nor sad, though she was seldom smiling; and from the habit of constant effort and solicitude at home, she seemed, when away and among young people, as if she hardly knew what to do with herself. But in old Mr. Hicks' spinning-room she was in her element; the great unfurnished chamber is cool and shady, and across its ample floor Persis has paced back and forth, at her light labour, till she has acquired an elastic grace of motion which dancing-masters often try in vain to teach. Indeed, I fancy that few of my fair readers know the real advantages of a thorough acquaintance with the spinning-wheel; the expanded chest, the well developed bust, the firm, springing step which belong to this healthiest and most graceful of all in-door employments. And let me whisper to some of my pretty, mincing, pit-a-pat friends, that an easy and elastic step is no trifling point in the estimation of those who know what real elegance is, independently of stupid fashions. Many a young lady can manage the curve of the wrist prescribed by the French prints, and let her shoulders fall so low that one can hardly help trembling for the consequences, yet her

walk, after all, needs all the charitable shadow afforded by long dresses. But we must not indulge in impertinent digressions.

Spinning differs from other feminine labours, inasmuch as its profits are dependent on the superior skill or industry of the spinner. Let a poor girl sew ever so steadily, she can earn but little addition to her miserable *per diem;* but in spinning there is, by ancient custom, a measure to the day's work; and a good hand may by extra exertion accomplish this twice in a June day. So poor Persis worked incessantly when she could be spared from home, encouraged by the thought that all she could accomplish over and above her "run and a half" was so much clear gain. A gain in home comforts, sweet Persis! but a terrible loss elsewhere.

The loss of caste was, however, less an evil to the Allens, because their home troubles had hitherto prevented their mingling much with the people about them, and so, they had not yet fully adopted the public sentiment. But they learned to know all about it in time.

There is one white and green house in the village, and that, where paint is still so rare, is by good right the Palazzo Pitti of our bounds. It is shown to the passing traveller as a proof of the civilization of the country, and elicits not a few remarks from the farmers who pass it slowly in their huge wagons. It is worth looking at, too, for even its outer decorations are a masterpiece of taste. The siding is plain white to be sure; but the frames of doors and windows, the cornices, the "corner-boards" and the piazza railing are all bright green. The sashes are in black—rather prison-like but vastly "genteel"—and the front door is in an elaborate mahogany style, with more "curly-wurlies" than usual. Within doors, a taste no less gorgeous is evident, for the wood-work is all of the brightest blue—probably in imitation of lapis-lazuli.

In this favoured and much-envied dwelling resides a lady who is considered by the public in general, and herself in particular, as the very cream of our aristocracy.

Mrs. Burnet is a fair and plump dame, whose age can only be guessed by considering a grown-up son. Not a wrinkle mars her smooth brow; not a gray hair mingles with the smooth brown tresses that are laid so demurely on either temple. Her coun-

tenance wears a fixed smile, and her words are measured by the strictest rule of propriety; and the tones which convey them to the ear are of so silvery a softness that one can hardly think the most yielding of all substances could melt between those correct lips. (This paraphrase is the result of much laborious thought.) But in the full brown eye above them there lurks—what shall we call it?—to say the least, a latent power which is felt through all those silvery tones, and in spite of all that winning softness. The initiated are exceedingly careful how they rouse this sleeping power; for in those singular tones—to convey which to the reader would require music-paper and some skill at annotation—things are sometimes said which other people might say passionately or sharply, but which Mrs. Burnet knows how to make the more bitter by sweetness.

This lady's household consisted usually of only two members beside herself—a serving-maid with a flat white face and a threatening beard—for Mrs. Burnet had an instinctive dislike of youth and beauty—and a young man toward whom nature had been more bounteous, but whom fortune had so neglected that he was fain to "do chores" for his board at Mrs. Burnet's, while he picked a very scanty education out of the village school. This poor youth, Cyprian Amory, was the nephew of the great lady, but only the gloom of her glory fell on him; for his mother had made an imprudent marriage, and her orphan boy was a heavy burthen to Mrs. Burnet's pride. She could not quite make an outcast of her sister's son, but she revenged the mortification which his poverty occasioned her, by rendering his situation as odious as possible; taking care always to represent him as an object of charity, although his services were such as would have earned ungrudged bread any where else. Cyprian was of a mild and quiet temper, and being unfitted by delicate health for the labour of farming, he was intent on preparing himself for that poorest of all drudgery, the teaching of a district school. So he bore all in a silence which his aunt ascribed to stupidity, but which a few friends that he loved, and whose love consoled him, considered the result of a patience and resignation almost saintly.

Besides Cyprian and the flat-faced serving-maid, Mrs. Burnet's

family boasted yet one member more—her only son and heir, of whom more, presently.

Mrs. Burnet's establishment was at no great distance from the humble dwelling of William Allen; indeed the two gardens joined at their farther extremity. And at that corner the wide difference between the two was not so evident, for the fruit-trees hid the splendid white and green mansion, while the roses and lilies which adorned Mr. Allen's garden had evidently never heard of our aristocracy, since they bloomed with a provoking splendour which Mrs. Burnet's did not always exhibit. That lady's general plan was so thrifty, that her grounds were largely devoted to corn and potatoes; and she did not remember to pay much attention to flowers, unless she longed for their decorative powers on some great occasion.

Such an occasion had arrived; for George Burnet had just come home after finishing what he called his "law studies;" studies which we rather think were comprised in six months' "sharp practice," as clerk to a gentleman who had quitted the shoemaker's bench for the law, on the supposition that the art of pettifogging would prove a stepping-stone to a bench of more dignity. This gentleman's neophyte, Mr. George Burnet, was such a youth as the only son of a doting mother is apt to be—wilful, conceited and very hard to please; in short, not voted particularly agreeable for any qualities of his own, but much reverenced as the heir-presumptive of the white and green house, and also on account of his aristocratic pretensions—his father having once been elected to the legislature. He was fully sensible of his advantages, and not a little apt to boast of his expectations; was good-natured when he was pleased, and very kind where he took a fancy—in short, one of those people who intend well, or at least intend no ill, but are never to be depended on for a day.

Mr. George Burnet came home in high spirits, determined to enjoy to the uttermost the interval between the finish of his preparation and the opening of sharp practice on his own account. He was extravagantly fond of dancing, and his mother had always promised him a grand party when he should have got through his studies, on the express condition, however, that he was to return immediately to business, and not stay to hunt and fish and sere-

nade about the neighbourhood. George found it easy to promise, and the party was now to come off.

The preparations for this great event had for some time been foreshadowed in the active brain of Mrs. Burnet; and George's "freedom suit" was duly bespoken, and two violins secured, long before the arrival of the graduate. But, as the appointed day drew nigh, who shall tell of the hopes and fears, the consultations and the arguments, which were expended on and over the list of favoured guests. Enough to say that it was almost the ditto of those familiar to the town-bred getters-up of splendid hospitality, (!) and that the principle of the whole thing was precisely the same, though set forth and put in practice in homelier guise. Who will do to invite? Who may be left out? Who will look best? Whose presence will reflect most honour on the entertainers? Whose enmity will be least formidable among those who ought to be excluded on account of want of *caste*, or want of *savoir faire?* George Burnet and his lady mother found it hard to agree in their estimate of the guests; George insisting upon all the pretty girls, and these, for the most part, portionless belles, being the last to be selected by Mrs. Burnet.

"Mary Stevens," said George.

"Poh! She goes out sewing!" said Mrs. Burnet.

"I don't care for that," said the dutiful son, "she has rosy cheeks, and I'll have her."

"There's Mary Drinkwater, I shall ask, of course," observed Mrs. Burnet.

"Squint-eyed!" said George.

"No matter for that," was the reply, "she's got a farm of her own. I hope you'll be very civil to her."

"Mother," said George Burnet, "I wouldn't marry Polly Drinkwater if there wasn't another girl in the world!"

"I haven't asked you to marry her; though, for that matter, it is just as easy to love a rich girl as a poor one," said Mrs. Burnet. "But, George, it is high time for you to have done with nonsense, and behave like a man. Mary Drinkwater is, after all—"

"Hush! mother," said George, politely laying his hand on his

mamma's mouth; "no use talking—let's go on with the party. There's Jane Lawton is a nice girl."

"But her mother's a fright," said Mrs. Burnet.

"Leave her out, then," said George.

"No, no; if you ask Jane, we must have the old folks."

"Lump 'em, then," said George; "and who has Phebe Penniman got tacked to her?"

"Nobody, thank fortune!" said his mother; "her old lame grandmother can't go out; but Phebe 'll come in a shilling calico."

"I don't care what she comes in," said the youth, "if she only brings those pretty bright eyes of hers with her; and Phebe's a good hearty girl, too; she can dance all night. But who was that splendid looking girl that was with her this morning? By George! I never saw such a step!"

"That was Persis Allen," said Mrs. Burnet; "a new family that moved in after you went away. But I will *not* have her, so that's settled! She's as proud as a peacock, for all she goes out to spin by the day at old Hicks's. I won't have her, though I long for some of those lilies to dress the supper-table with. I can't get the lilies without asking her, but I'd rather go without."

"But she's a screamer of a girl," persisted Master George; "I'd rather have her than all the rest."

"But you won't have her, though," said Mrs. Burnet; and George, seeing her so determined, let the matter drop, a sure sign that he was determined, too.

But all his strategy was vain. No surprise, no coaxing, no pouting, had the least effect upon Mrs. Burnet. The Allen family had pertinaciously omitted all that courting which, we regret to say, follows wealth and power even to the wilds; and they had, moreover, found occasion, more than once, to resent certain impertinences which Mrs. Burnet was in the habit of offering to her poorer neighbours. So the lady was inexorable; and, strong in her smooth bitterness, she carried her point. Persis was left out.

But, on the eve of the great day, when the preparations were in great forwardness, those dazzling lilies were again mentioned; and George, who was never much hampered by the restraints of good breeding, declared he would get the lilies without inviting the

damsel, and, on this glorious thought intent, he climbed the intervening fence, by moonlight, and made directly for the spot rendered lovely by the choicest flowers of our poor Persis. This was the neighbourhood of a little arbour, over the rustic framework of which a luxuriant wild-grape had been trained, to shade a soft bank covered with abundant mosses. The overpowering perfume of the lilies, called forth in double measure by the dew, guided our adventurer directly to their place, even before they became visible in the moonlight; and he was about to rifle the bed, when his eye was caught by as white an object in the arbour. George's conscience whispered that it was a "sperrit;" but, after the first moment's start, he could not resist venturing a little nearer; and there was Persis Allen, fast asleep on her mossy couch, her fair forehead upward toward the sky, a book still open on her lap, and a lily fallen at her feet, fit emblem of her own purity and beauty.

Mr. George Burnet stood entranced. He had seen no such personification of beauty and romance in the whole course of his law-studies. He ventured nearer,—nearer still—until he could distinguish the lightest curl waved by the evening breeze, and even the satin smoothness of the skin beneath. But while he still gazed, the sleeping beauty stirred—opened her eyes—uttered a slight exclamation, as if not quite sure that what she saw was real—and our gallant youth darted off, as much frightened as if the opening of those eyes had threatened literal instead of only figurative death. The young girl did not scream, although she ought, in propriety, to have done so. She had no presentiment that she was to be made a heroine of; and, in truth, men of all sorts are too plenty, and too unceremonious, at the West, to excite much alarm. So, concluding that the intruder had been only some neighbouring marauder in search of her father's fine raspberries, she picked up her bonnet, and walked quietly into the house.

Meanwhile, our scared swain had reached his own maternal mansion; and, coming empty-handed, was closely questioned, and not a little laughed at when he recounted the failure of his adventure.

"But, hold on a little till I tell ye!" interposed Master George: "If she hadn't been there I'd have got 'em easy enough; but the

sight of such a white thing, you know, right in the moonlight, made my heart beat so that I could hardly see. But, by George! what a girl! Mother! I must and will have that girl at my party, and so there's an end of it."

"How can you be so vulgar, George?" replied his mother.

"Vulgar or not," persisted he, "if she don't come, I don't! I'll go and spend the evening with her, instead of those dowdies."

"George," said Mrs. Burnet, "you always were an obstinate boy, but I was in hopes you had more sense now."

"So I have," said the dutiful youth, "and that's the reason I want my own way. Come, mother, get your bonnet and shawl, and let's go over and invite that pretty—what's her name? and then we'll ask her for the flowers."

And George at length carried his point, and dragged his mother over to William Allen's.

"Persis, dear," said Mrs. Burnet, in her most seducing and mellifluent tones, as soon as the requisite salutations were over, "will you come and spend the evening to-morrow? We shall have a number of young people—"

"And fiddles," interposed George, in way of parenthesis.

Persis murmured something in reply, but Mrs. Burnet proceeded without waiting for an answer.

"And, if you *can't* come, you will at least give me a few of your beautiful flowers to dress my supper-table. I must have some of those lilies. You have so many that I am sure you can spare me some."

"Oh yes, certainly," Persis said; "you shall have the lilies in welcome."

"But you'll come," said George, whose eyes had devoured the beautiful face with no measured stare all this time; "you'll come, won't you?"

"I—I don't know—I'll ask mother," said Persis.

"Well! I'll send for the flowers in the morning," said Mrs. Burnet, hurrying away quite unceremoniously.

George was very reluctant to be dragged off without a promise from Persis, but he was obliged to be content with the advantage he had gained. He felt that the tone of his mother's invitation had not been what it should be, but he hoped his own urgency

had supplied all deficiencies. An invitation to the Palazzo was not likely to be contemned by any of the village damsels. We must confess, it occasioned no little flutter in the innocent heart of Persis; but she was, as we have said, prematurely sober and self-restrained, and sought good advice before she ventured to decide on a point so important. She did not even think "What shall I wear?" perhaps the scantiness of her wardrobe saved her the trouble. She only said to her parents, "Had I better go?"

They were naturally disposed to think Persis might safely follow her own inclination in the matter; and the young girl had as naturally been inclined to what all young people love. But the next morning, when Persis went as usual to her spinning, she mentioned the whole affair to old Mr. Hicks and his good sister; the visit of the evening before, the hasty tone of the mother as contrasted with the urgency of the son; and also, for we must own that Persis, like many a simple country damsel, had a quick perception of the ludicrous—the odd way Mrs. Burnet had of coupling her request for the lilies so closely with the invitation for the evening.

"Just like her!" said Aunt Hetty, "she's the coldest-heartedest crittur that ever spoke."

"She is a proud, unfeeling woman," said old Mr. Hicks, "and, if you'll take my advice, my dear, you'll keep clear of the Burnets altogether. George is always crazy after some pretty face or another, and it's no credit to a young girl like you to have his acquaintance. If he or his mother should meet you in the street, at B——, they wouldn't know you at all. Don't go, Persis."

At this advice from the plain-spoken old man, Persis blushed deeply, and the vision of the grand party, which had begun to loom large in her imagination, faded away almost entirely. She had so much respect for farmer Hicks, who was known as the oldest settler and universally looked up to by the neighbours, that she resolved at once to follow his advice, and decline the tempting invitation. Besides, in a cooler view, an instinctive self-respect whispered that Mrs. Burnet's manner was any thing but what it should have been, and that the only urgency had been on the part of the young man. So she told her good old friend that she would not go to Mrs. Burnet's.

The lilies went, however, and formed the crowning decoration of the feast, dividing the public eye with the splendid "pediment" of maccaroons which had been brought with great care and solicitude from B——. The entire gentility of the neighbouring village was collected. There was the lawyer's lady, and the clergyman's lady, and the storekeeper's lady, all drest as primly as possible, and looking as solemn as the occasion required. Then, there was Mrs. Millbank, the tailor's lady, a very "genteel" woman, and she wore an elegant black bombazine, with pink satin bows on the shoulders, and a flounce half a yard deep. Mrs. Perine, the harness-maker's lady, was in plain white, but she wore a scarf of rainbow hues, and a most superb and towering head-dress of black feathers and pale blue roses. Miss Adriance, the school-ma'am, was invited, because she was "genteel" and wore spectacles, though her calling was scarcely the thing for a select party; and she honoured the occasion by appearing in a green merino, and a mob-cap, full trimmed with yellow ribbons. But it would require the accuracy of a court-circular to describe the costume of every star that twinkled in Mrs. Burnet's parlour on that distinguished evening. We can but observe that the eyes were brighter than the candles, and the conversation much less blue than the cerulean mantelpiece. The very beaux were inspired, and, instead of sneaking into corners, or getting behind the door, they came boldly forward, talked and laughed among themselves, and looked sideways at the girls, with most unwonted assurance.

George, arrayed in the "freedom suit"—solemn black, of course, as became his profession—made the agreeable to his male guests after the most approved style—shaking hands heartily, and asking them to "take something to drink." But the festivities had reached no great height, when the youthful heir, scanning closely the tittering circle, missed the bright mistress of the lilies, and, finding or making an opportunity to speak to his mamma, asked if "the Allen girl" had not come.

"No, my dear," said the honey-voiced Mrs. Burnet, "I dare say she couldn't get her frock washed in time, or she would have been here."

As the lady turned away, with a gentle titter at her own wit, her young hopeful vanished by the nearest door.

"Where's your girl?" said he a few moments after, addressing Mr. Allen.

"Gone to bed," was the cool reply.

"Why! isn't she coming to our 'us?"

"Not this night, I think," replied her father, very composedly for, be it known, that the ceremonies of acceptance and apology are not in vogue among us—every body exercising his democratic privilege of going or staying away, without rendering account to any one.

"Why! that beats all!" exclaimed Mr. George, in considerable vexation. "Why didn't she come?"

"Well—I believe she didn't want to," said Mr. Allen.

"I don't believe that," muttered George, and, going out of the door, he looked up at the only upper window.

"Halloo! Persis—I say, Persis!"

No answer.

"Persis Allen; what's the matter with you?"

Dead silence; and poor George, casting a wrathful look at the papa quietly smoking his pipe in the kitchen, went his way back to the party, resolving to pay the most provoking attention to Miss Drinkwater, by way of revenging himself on Fate and Persis Allen.

The party went off in the usual style—that is to say, dull and stiff at first, chattering and warm secondly, and then, after due attention to the vivers, coming to an uproarious finale. Mr. George, early excited by drinking with his "dear five hundred friends," more or less, became quite stupid before the company departed; and, when the last shawl had left the entry-table, and the second supply of tallow candles began to burn low in the sockets, Mrs. Burnet was obliged to call in the strong arm of Huldy from the kitchen to get Mr. George up to bed.

The next day, it became too evident that the freedom-party had cost Mr. George Burnet a violent fever. He awoke out of a long sleep with an agonizing pain in his head, and a pulse going at railroad speed. Before evening medical aid had been summoned, heads and vials shaken, and a cot put into George's room for Mrs.

Burnet, and a smoked ham put into the pot for the "watchers." (Watchers are always expected to be very hungry.) In short, it was a serious case, and excited much interest with the two Galens of the neighbourhood.

"Midnight!—and not a nose—" from one end of the village to the other—"snored"—for the screams and ravings of the unfortunate youth freighted the weary echoes.

"Persis! Persis Allen! why don't she come?" rung in the night air, so distinctly that the owner of the appellation lay trembling in her little attic, with the vague dread of distress and impending disaster. All night long did the heart-rending tones of the sufferer keep her awake, and it was scarcely daylight when a messenger from Mrs. Burnet knocked loudly at her father's door, to entreat Persis to come but for a moment to George's bedside, hoping that the sight of her might have some effect in soothing his irritation. She went, though trembling and almost fainting with fright and agitation, never doubting, in her simplicity, whether it was proper for her to comply with so unusual a request. There is a sort of sacred reverence for the sick in those regions, where there is scarce any reverence for any thing else.

The moment George's delirious brain became aware of the presence of the pale beauty, he would have sprung from his bed but for strong arms that held him down. It was indeed surprising that her image should have taken so firm a hold on his memory and imagination; but it soon became evident that nothing but her presence would soothe his more than "midsummer madness." So there the poor girl was obliged to sit, her cold hand clasped between his burning palms, and his wild eyes fixed upon her face, hour after hour, listening to his raving vows that she and she only should be his wife, spite of his mother and—a less smooth-looking personage.

We are not to suppose that Persis was unmoved by the sound of all these passionate words. Words have a power of their own, as we have all doubtless experienced, and besides, George Burnet was rather a handsome young man, and the certain heir of a still handsomer property. So that we shall not pretend that his protestations, though made in all the wildness of delirium, fell upon deaf ears or a stony heart. On the other side of the bed stood

Cyprian Amory, unwearied in his attention to the sick man, but watching with a painful anxiety the changes in the pale face of Persis, and frequently suggesting something which might tend to quiet George and relieve her unpleasant situation. At length George's ravings grew fainter, his grasp gradually slackened, his eyes closed, and he fell asleep, murmuring blessings on the fair being who had so kindly soothed his wretchedness. Persis was removed, half fainting, and it was not until some hours' rest that she was able to return home, so completely had her nerves been overwrought by this distressing scene. Yet Mrs. Burnet dismissed her without the slightest acknowledgment of the sacrifice she had made to humanity; evidently rejoiced to get rid of so dangerous a friend.

But there was further trouble in store for the politic mamma. George's delirium subsided, it is true, but his memory proved wonderfully tenacious of the subject of his ravings. As he gained strength his natural willfulness showed itself, and a determination to make good all he had said to Persis was but too apparent. The violence of his disease was not of long duration, but it had so shattered him that his convalescence was slow; and, during the weeks of his scarce perceptible amendment, his talk was continually of his fair neighbour. His mother would not stay in the room to listen to what so deeply offended her; but Cyprian was always there, and into his unwilling ear did George pour all his plans for the future.

"We shan't live here, Cyp," he would say; "she's too splendid a creature for the woods, and beside, mother would worry her life out. Isn't she a sweet creature, Cyp? Stay—what do you go away for? You shall be my clerk, Cyp, you write so much better than I do—you shall study law with me—take care of my business whenever I'm away. I shall be sent to Congress by and bye, and, while I'm gone to Washington, you'll be head man at home. Only help me to persuade my mother. Won't *she* make a figure at Washington? Such a step! and how she carries her head!" and he would run on by the hour after this fashion, holding Cyprian fast till his new found strength would be entirely exhausted, and he would fall asleep only to wake and renew the strain.

Matters could not long go on thus. It never entered the head of either mother or son that Persis Allen would have to be asked more than once; and Mrs. Burnet only waited her son's more complete recovery to put an end to his fine dreams. When the time came for the execution of this her fixed purpose, there was a scene indeed. George cried and swore alternately, while his mother, calm as usual, with her lips compressed to a thready thinness, and that unearthly light in her eye which malicious eyes *will* perversely emit when their owner most desires to seem angelically virtuous, she expressed her unalterable determination to disinherit him if he persisted in marrying a girl who earned her living by spinning.

This was a tremendous engine, and wielded with the coolness so peculiar to Mrs. Burnet, it bore with terrible force upon poor George, who had been brought up to expect a fortune which was entirely in his mother's power. But opposition only contributed to keep alive a determination which would otherwise most probably have shared the fate of many others which George had made and broken. He did not venture to defy his mother openly, for, in his eyes as well as hers, the possession of property was all that made any essential difference between one man and another. But there had been nothing in his education which forbade his pursuing covertly what he had not courage to defend; and Persis was doomed to be waylaid on all occasions by her impetuous admirer, till she was almost ready to marry him to get rid of him.

George had now entirely recovered, and his mother insisted on his returning to his business according to promise. Cyprian took charge of the village school, and the white and green house presented a silent and very haughty-looking exterior—Mrs. Burnet having subsided into her usual aristocratic grandeur, and not even knowing the poor spinning-girl when she met her. Cyprian Amory, it is true, though he belonged to the great house, was troubled with no such shortness of memory—indeed, it would have been fortunate for him if he had, poor fellow! for why should he remember Persis? They often encountered at sunset, when each was returning from the day's task; and it was perhaps from an idea that Persis' own youth had not passed without its trials and struggles, that Cyprian was led at times to be rather

confidential on the subject of his condition and its difficulties. It was thus that the fair spinning-girl learned that the only chance to which Cyprian looked for an escape from the horrors of a district-school, was George's consenting to receive him as a clerk, a destiny not in itself to be coveted, yet far preferable to its alternative. Such was the pity and sympathy excited in the gentle breast of Persis, that she almost wished sometimes that she had accepted George, since she might then have been of so much service to poor Cyprian!

But the time came when Cyprian no longer met Persis, as he sauntered along the road, after shutting up the school-house. She was bound, day and night almost, to the death-bed of her kind old friend, farmer Hicks, whose sister, quite infirm, and almost imbecile, depended on Persis as on a daughter. Inured as she was to care and to personal sacrifice, the aid of Persis about the sick-bed was invaluable, and the old man, with his dying breath, blessed her, and recommended his sister to her kindness.

After he was gone, and his will came to be opened, it was found that he had left Persis his entire property, with the sole burthen of a comfortable support for the aged sister, "feeling," the will said, "that she could not be in better hands.'

Here was an overturn of affairs! and, at first, it seemed likely to be the overturn of poor Persis' wits, too; not that she was elated, but perplexed and embarrassed in the extreme by the surprise, and by the sudden weight of responsibility. She was to live in her own house, that the old lady might not be subject to the pain of a removal; and, as Persis' younger sister was now able to supply in part her place at home, this was soon arranged; but other matters presented more formidable difficulties.

We must not pretend that our village maiden had been indifferent to the addresses of a young gentleman who was considered by the entire democracy about her to be so much "above" her. She had a kind and noble heart, but, after all, she was human, and subject to the influence of *caste*, as well as the rest of us. George Burnet, a young "lawyer," the beau of the country, and heir of the splendid white and green house and the fine farm appended to it, would have been irresistible, perhaps, but for a something—an unexplained, troublesome something, which presented

itself before Persis' mental vision whenever she had time to think of the matter. There was drawn, by some magical or invisible power, on the retina of her mind's eye, a pretty rural scene—a log-house, plain and small, shaded with trees and surrounded with gay flowers. In the upper chamber of this humble abode was a neatly dressed damsel plying the great wheel, and in the little garden which her window commanded, was a tall, slender young man, busily tending some well-kept rows of vegetables, and occasionally casting a glance upward at the window. The damsel at the wheel was Persis herself, the youth in the garden, her friend, Cyprian Amory.

This pretty picture had often presented itself to Persis, while she was still a simple spinning-girl, and it stood very much in the way of George Burnet's interest. And yet, if Persis could only marry George, how much might she brighten the lot of her friend, Cyprian. George would take Cyprian into his office, and, once on the way, Cyprian might, nay, must, rise to a condition in life so much better suited to a mind like his. A farmer's life would never do for that delicate frame, and a school in the country is only another name for starvation, and not reputable starvation either. It was such considerations as these that had caused Persis sometimes to listen to George Burnet, and try to make up her mind to like him, though she had told him no a thousand times.

It was only a few days after the funeral of old Mr. Hicks, that the old aunty and her young guardian were still seated at the tea-table, when they were surprised by a visit from Mrs. Burnet. That agreeable lady was decked in her sweetest smiles, and paid her compliments of condolence in the choicest phrase, crowning all by hoping that as Miss Allen must be quite at leisure she should have the pleasure of seeing her often—very often. She was so fond of the society of young people! and now they were to be such near neighbours, she hoped Persis would be "sociable."

This visit was followed at no great distance by another, with the avowed object of pleading George's cause, the match being now warmly desired by the devoted mother. She had understood, she said, that there had been an attachment, (she did not say a mutual one, though her manner implied it,) but Miss Allen must be aware that nothing could be more imprudent than engagements

hastily made, and without proper provision for the future. *Now* there could be no possible objection; and she hoped her dear Persis would not object to an early day, since poor George would find it impossible to engage in business until his mind was at rest.

All this was delivered so volubly that Persis had no opportunity for a word, but even while Mrs. Burnet was speaking, her mind had been unconsciously applying all these prudential observations in another direction. It was a brilliant thought, truly, and it was marvelous that it had not suggested itself before—that she was an heiress, and could do as she liked. She had money enough for two, and Cyprian could hire workmen, and oversee the farm as old Mr. Hicks had done. All this was concluded in a moment; and, as a finish to the cogitation, grown worldly wise by suffering, she considered that if any thing should yet be lacking, she could still ply the wheel as before, and so make all right.

And, when Mrs. Burnet had exhausted all her eloquence, and paused for a reply, she got only a plain and somewhat absent negative.

Who shall give the faintest idea of her rage? Who paint the gleam of that eye, or the sharp thinness of the compressed lips? Bitter sweet was she at parting, but Persis was so occupied with her new idea that she felt no embarrassment at having offended the great lady.

But how to put her plan in Cyprian's head? We can account for what follows only in one way—the intensity of the thought which dwelt on him for so long a time must have drawn him to her side; for he no sooner understood that Mrs. Burnet had been to see Persis than he found himself irresistibly impelled toward the old farm-house.

And there, in the parlour, by the great western window, sat Persis; her head leaning on her hand, her eyes fixed on vacancy, and her thoughts so absorbing that she did not perceive Cyprian's entrance until he stood before her. A start—a fluttering blush, and the magnetic influence was evident to both. Cyprian was not yet so much of a schoolmaster that he could talk nothing but grammar; and though you might have found it difficult to parse what he said to Persis on that occasion, the meaning was, on the

whole, remarkably clear to her mind. She felt satisfactorily convinced that Cyprian had long loved her, though pride and poverty would forever have sealed his lips, but for the rumour that she had decidedly refused a rich lover.

And what did poor George Burnet do? He talked undutifully to his amiable mamma, and swore he would go and be a Patriot. Mrs. Burnet took both these things quietly, and George, after all, had to marry Polly Drinkwater.

HARVEST MUSINGS.

WHO can help falling into a reverie at the decline of a sultry summer day? Who can pass unnoticed the delicious changes in the light and in the air; the orange tints darkening into purple, and the hot breath of Day freshened by the soft-falling dew? The whip-poor-wills "striving one with the other which could in most dainty variety recount their wrong-caused sorrow,"* fill the woods with their plaints; the harvest-moon rises in the blue depths of ether, globular to the sight, not merely round; and of a deep golden orange colour, like—like—Jerry Dingle says it is like "the yelk of an egg that's been froze, and then dropt into a great tub o' bluin'-water." Not so very unlike, good Jerry, as mine own observation witnesseth at this moment; and so, in the barrenness of our own sun-burnt and wilted fancy, we will let thy homely comparison stand for want of a better.

How still is this evening atmosphere! The breeze is not yet strong enough to wave the curtain; it only stirs it, as with an expectant thrill! Would it might come! with force sufficient to drive away some of these musquitoes, whose attacks are enough to put to flight all romantic thoughts except those of boarding-school girls and midshipmen. The night-hawks are very busy; they have scented our broods of young turkeys; and there are owls enough hooting and flying about, to "scare" any body that was not "born in the woods." The cows come lowing home, bringing with them a circumambient cloud of musquitoes, to "spell" those which have exhausted their energies upon us. One lone and lorn individual of the horned people stays mourning in the forest; probably calling with fruitless iteration upon her tender offspring,

* Sir Philip Sydney's "Arcadia."

doomed to the knife at this season of "boarding hands." The katydids are high in their eternal disputation; and somewhere within hearing, though out of sight, is Jerry Dingle, with a rifle, getting his cradle ready for to-morrow.

Oh, mystery of mysteries were once these dark sayings to my uninitiated ear! Why should a "rifle" be needed for reaping, since though grain shoots, nobody every heard of its being shot? And the "cradle?" Wheat waves, but why should it be rocked? Wild music called me once to the gate, and there stood Jerry with a whetstone sharpening a scythe, which had several slender rods arranged parallel with its curved blade, and now the riddle was read. But I have never learned to this day why a whetstone should be called a "rifle," while there is so different an implement of the same name so much in use among us. The "cradle" seems more intelligible, because the pretty slender curved bars which help to lay the grain in regular rows as fast as it is cut, do bear some little resemblance to the form of rockers.

The operation of cradling is worth a journey to see. The sickle may be more classical, but it cannot compare in beauty with the swaying, regular motion of the cradle, which cuts at once a space as wide as strong arms, aided by a long blade, can describe; and at the same time lays the golden treasure in beautiful lines, like well-ordered hosts in array of battle. There is no movement more graceful and harmonious than that of a row of cradlers; none on which one can gaze by the hour with more pleasure. It suggests the idea of soft music—*siciliano* or *gracioso*.

The subject of the weather, always so valuable a resource in the way of conversation, is never more prominent than during the harvest time. Saving and excepting new year's day, when the beaux are apt to be, as Mr. C. said, "hard up for talk," and some few bitter days in February, when tingling fingers and crimson noses remind one inevitably of the state of the atmosphere, there is indeed no period when the weather is so universally the theme for young and old, rich and poor. In town this subjection to the skyey influences wears one aspect, in the country another. There is no part of the year when the difference between city and country views and habits is more striking.

Those who have brought city habits with them to this green and growing world, and who naturally look back very frequently with feelings of affectionate reminiscence to the roasting brick houses and the broiling flag pavements which helped to ripen their earlier summers, are particularly alive to the change in their location and circumstances when this time comes round. How the citizen labours to be cool! How pathetically he descants on each particular stage of sweltering! How do magazines and dailies teem with articles which only to read bring the drops to one's forehead! What listless hours! what groans, what fans, what lemonade, what ice-cream, are associated in civic minds with the idea of the dog-days! What racing to springs and watering-places, what crowding in ferry-boats and rail-road cars, attest the anxiety of the urbane world for a breath of cool air! Recreation has become a serious business; amusement a solemn duty; for who can work in such weather? At Saratoga or the Falls, at Rockaway or Nahant, strenuous Idleness has but one aim—the killing of the sultry hours; and nobody will deny, that after all, the hours sometimes die hard.

We too labour to be cool, but it is after another sort. The citizen who finds it difficult to sustain life at this season, even with the aid of baths and ices, may be curious to know how the wretched being whom necessity forces to labour under the sun of August, endures the burden of existence; how often he seeks the cooling shade; what drinks moisten his parched throat; by what means he contrives to fan his burning brow. Fear nothing, oh! sympathizing reader! Save thy sensibilities for a more urgent call. This is a world of compensations. The labourer has neither shade, nor *punkah*, nor lemonade, nor even ginger-beer. He may get a drink of buttermilk occasionally; but the sparkling, ice-cold spring supplies his best beverage; and in place of all thy luxuries he lives from sunrise till sunset in a perpetual vapour-bath, of Nature's own providing; more refreshing by far than even the famed solace of the Turk; and he does his own shampooing so well that every power of his frame is kept incessantly in the very best condition. He would die on thy sofa.

Yes! in the country all is activity and bustle, at the very time when the seekers of pleasure are at their wit's end for pastime.

It is the era not only *from* which, but *toward* which all reckon for weeks. "I can't undertake it afore harvest." "Well, I'll see about it after harvest." "Wait till we know how the harvest turns out." Does wife or daughter long for a new dress? "I'd rather give you two after harvest." Is a jaunt in question? The grain must be secured before it is talked of. Is a man "under the harrows," that is, hard pressed by his creditors? He begs only for a delay till after harvest. Not that all things turn out always according to the expectations of these sanguine calculators. But with the husbandman this time is the boundary of his immediate hope—his mental sensible horizon—the natural limit of his view. Hope, it is true, is in this as in other cases, often delusive enough; but the return of the season affords many a peg on which to hang bright promises that cheer from afar the weary way of the farmer.

When it comes, as we have said, all is activity and bustle. All energies are concentrated upon it, and every thing gives way to it. Politics for a time let go their hold upon the rustic partisan. He cares not for vetoes, nor even for tariffs; bad legislation stays not the ripening of corn; (fortunately for us all.) When the beneficent Sun has done his work, and wheat nods its brown head and sways languidly in the faint breath of the morning; when corn flings its silken banners abroad, and the earth seems every where burdened with Heaven's bounty; at this glorious season the farmer, with his heart and his arm nerved by hope, goes forth to put the finishing stroke to the year's labours. No fear of the sun's fervours deters or disheartens him. He fears only the delicious cooling shower which would drive his "hands" to the barn, and perhaps detain his grain on the ground long enough materially to injure its quality.

To be early in the field is the farmer's maxim. He waits only for light enough to work by, before calling up his men, who are apt to be up before he calls them, so contagious is the enthusiasm of the hour. No one likes to be a laggard in harvest. And then the early morning air is so fresh and so inspiriting; the brightening hues of the pearly East so irresistibly glorious, the rising of the sun so majestic, that even the dull soul feels, and the dull eye gazes, with an admiration not unmixed with awe. Two hours'

labour before the six o'clock breakfast lays bare a wide space in the field, for very numerous are the strong arms brought up to the work. This season is the test of the husbandman's capabilities, whether as master or man. The unthrifty is behindhand in his preparations. He has depended upon *luck* for his assistants, and put off looking for or engaging them until the last moment. Luck, as usual, takes care of those who take care of themselves, and so neighbour Feckless is obliged to take up with the leavings. When it is time to begin, scythes want sharpening and rifles are worn out or lost, and perhaps a ride of ten miles is necessary to repair the deficiency. Before harvest is half over, the stock of provisions proves scanty, and half a day must be spent in borrowing of the neighbours. With all these and many more drawbacks, the work goes on but slowly, and the crop is perhaps not properly secured in season. Wheat will become so dead ripe that much is lost in the gathering, or perhaps successive rains, when it ought to be under cover, will rust and ruin it entirely. Neighbour Feckless has of course no barn; (in the new country better farmers cannot always afford one;) and being obliged to put up his grain in a hurry, it is perhaps not sufficiently dried, or not well stacked; in which case every grain will sprout and grow in such a way that the entire mass becomes one body of shoots, so that it must be torn apart, and is only fit to feed the cattle with. "Bad luck!" sighs our poor friend.

Far otherwise runs the experience of the thriving farmer. All is ready betimes, and due allowance made for lee-way and "peradventures." He is not obliged to overwork himself or his people. He goes forward in his own business in order to insure its success. It is proverbial in the country that "Come, boys!" is always better than "Go, boys!" Neighbour Thrifty knows this so well that if he be not in the freshness of his strength, so that he can take the lead in mowing or reaping, he will yet engage in some part of the day's labours, which will keep him in the midst of his men, so that the influence of his eye and of his voice may be felt, without his incurring the odious suspicion of being a mere overseer or task-master. And what a various congregation is that which does his bidding! Not mere day-labourers—for the country furnishes comparatively few of these—but all men of all

kinds. Do you want your wagon-wheel mended? The wheelwright, if he have no fields of his own, is busy in those of his neighbour. The carpenter will not drive a nail for love or money, for he too is "bespoke." You are unlucky if your nag need shoeing at this critical period, for the son of Vulcan will not have time to light a fire in his own smithy, perhaps for a fortnight. Peep into the village school-house; you will find none there but minors, in a very literal sense; wee things who would be only in the way at home. All boys who are old enough to rake or run on errands are sure to be in the field, and the girls are helping at home to boil and bake. The interests of learning have for the time the go-by. This is so well understood that in most places the master abdicates for the season in favour of the female sovereign, again to resume the sceptre when Winter grasps his.

Stranger than all, even law-suits are suspended, for the justice is in the field; witnesses are swinging the cradle; all possible jurymen are scattered miles apart, mowing the broad savannahs; and the contending parties themselves are too much engrossed, each with his own business, to wish matters pushed to extremities at such a crisis. Even the young lover almost forgets the flaxen ringlets of his sweetheart in the bustle of a field-day, and if he meet the damsel at evening will be apt to entertain her with an account of his achievements with the cradle or the sickle. Idleness is banished so completely that even the incurably lazy bustle about as if they too wished to do something. It is amusing to see one of this class at this juncture. In the general rush of business and consequent scarcity of strong arms, he knows that even his aid is of consequence. Feeling this to be emphatically his day, he is disposed to make the most of it. He accordingly assumes a swaggering air; don't know whether he'll come or not: but, on the whole, guesses he'll help! He braces up for the occasion, lays by his rifle and his fishing-tackle, and like a spinning-top whirls round bravely for a while, but if not now and then lashed into speed by some new motive, soon subsides into his natural state of repose. We have known a worthy of this tone promise to "help" four different farmers, and after all, take

down his rifle and "guess he'd better go and try if he couldn't see a deer!"

The good woman within doors is far from being idle all this time. Hers is the pleasant though rather arduous task of keeping the harvesters in heart for the labours of the day, and for this purpose she summons all her skill and forethought, and sets forth all her good cheer. Pies and cake and all manner of rustic dainties grace her bounteous board; for her reputation is at stake, since she is supposed at this time to do her very best. To set a poor table at harvest is death to any housewifely reputation. Good humour too is very desirable, where work is to be done; and to this we all know good cheer is apt to contribute; and no mistress likes to see her table surrounded by sour faces, even if the work should go on as well as ever. The providing for a dozen or two of harvest-hands is not a matter of any especial research; since although, as we have hinted, some delicacies are always included, yet the main body of the meal, three times a day, is formed of pork and hot bread. Where these are abundant, (and no Western farmer need lack either,) the adjuncts are matter of small moment. Pork and hot bread three times a day! No wonder they can work twelve hours out of the twenty-four. To labour any less on such diet would be suicide.

One of the pretty sights of these days is the passing of the huge loads of grain and hay as they are brought home to their several owners. There are generally three or four men and boys on the top of each load, chattering merrily, urging on the cattle, and evincing in their tones and gestures a glad sense of bustle and importance which is quite infectious. One cannot help watching them as they toss and stack their graceful burdens, and sympathizing in their merry laughter, and almost envying them their light-hearted jocularity. By and by the wagon passes again, a mere frame, with a man or boy at every stake, holding on for life, and laughing and talking louder than ever, since the speed is tenfold and the jolting in proportion. The gradual completion of a stack and the final pointing out and thatching which is to secure all within from the weather, is an operation in which we often find amusement by the hour.

The harvest-moon is a phenomenon which can hardly be passed

over, in thinking of this season. As if to cheer and aid the husbandman on whose apparently humble labours the comfort, the very existence of the proudest is absolutely dependant, the moon shows her glowing face at nearly the same hour for a whole week, lengthening out the day with some hours of refreshing coolness. The surpassing beauty of her mild light can be fully appreciated only after a day of heat and dust and exertion. In the country, in the true wild forest, and after the labours of the harvest field, it has an ineffable charm. We will not call the harvest-moon a miracle, for astronomers explain her constancy; but we will say that a phenomenon so admirably adapted to the consolation and refreshment of the weary tiller of the soil, seems to refer us directly to the divine benignity, which disdains not to watch over the comforts as well as the necessities of all.

Would I might add to this sketch of the labours of the harvest, that we do honour to its close by some innocent festivities like those which used to be known under the name of harvest-home. But alas! our holydays are only political; election days, when it is our business to vote, and "Independence," when it is our business to rejoice. We have no days consecrated to innocent hilarity; no days of the feast of in-gathering, over which harmless Sport may preside, gladdening at once the heart of young and old, and strengthening the links of human sympathy. But this is a work-a-day world, and we are a working people. Granted; yet we should work no whit the less for an occasional interval of gayety. But there's "Thanksgiving"—true; and good as far as it goes. It is a family gathering; a set season for the meeting of near friends, and renewing of all thoughts of affectionate interest. In this new world we have scarcely begun to pay respect to this occasion: the custom is regarded partly as sectional, partly as inappropriate; for our family-friends, where are they? With our joy there would mingle a touch of sadness. We could not rejoice in thinking of the absent.

Are we wiser than our forefathers?—those of the olden time, when it was supposed there was a time for merry-making, among other good things in this world? Were the feast of harvest and the feast of in-gathering, which were ordained to the Jews by the highest authority, purely ceremonial? Imperative obligation is

allowed to attach to the command, "Six days shalt thou labour, and on the seventh thou shalt rest." Is no weight whatever to be given to that which immediately follows: "Thou shalt keep the feast of harvest, the first-fruits of thy labours . . . and the feast of in-gathering, which is in the end of the year?" A plain reader may reasonably be puzzled by the very great stress we lay upon the one, and the absolute neglect with which we treat the other. It is true we know but little of the especial form of these festivals, but we know that rejoicing made a part of them, and that the joy was heightened by feasting and music. Not only were these permitted, but commanded; only the revelry which attended them, when manners became corrupt, was condemned. Has the nature of man so changed that all this has now become unsuitable? Does he really eschew pleasures, or have his pleasures assumed a darker character?

THE BEE-TREE.

Among the various settlers of the wide West, there is no class which exhibits more striking peculiarities than that which, in spite of hard work, honesty, and sobriety, still continues hopelessly poor. None find more difficulty in the solution of the enigma presented by this state of things, than the sufferers themselves; and it is with some bitterness of spirit that they come at last to the conclusion, that the difference between their own condition and that of their prosperous neighbours, is entirely owing to their own "bad luck;" while the prosperous neighbours look musingly at the ragged children and squalid wife, and regret that the head of the house "ha'n't no faculty." Perhaps neither view is quite correct.

In the very last place one would have selected for a dwelling, —in the centre of a wide expanse of low, marshy land,—on a swelling knoll, which looks like an island,—stands the forlorn dwelling of my good friend, Silas Ashburn, one of the most conspicuous victims of the "bad luck" alluded to. Silas was among the earliest settlers of our part of the country, and had half a county to choose from when he "located" in the swamp, —half a county of as beautiful dale and upland as can be found in the vicinity of the great lakes. But he says there is "the very first-rate of pasturing" for his cows, (and well there may be, on forty acres of wet grass!) and as for the agues which have nearly made skeletons of himself and his family, his opinion is that it would not have made a bit of difference if he had settled on the highest land in Michi*gan*, since "every body knows if you've got to have the ague, why you've got to, and all the high land and dry land, and *Queen Ann** in the world wouldn't make no odds."

* Quinine.

Silas does not get rich, nor even comfortably well off, although he works, as he says, "like a tiger." This he thinks is because "rich folks ain't willing poor folks should live," and because he, in particular, always has such bad luck. Why shouldn't he make money? Why should he not have a farm as well stocked, a house as well supplied, and a family as well clothed and cared for in all respects, as his old neighbour John Dean, who came with him from "York State?" Dean has never speculated, nor hunted, nor fished, nor found honey, nor sent his family to pick berries for sale. All these has Silas done, and more. His family have worked hard; they have worn their old clothes till they well nigh dropped off; many a day, nay, month, has passed, seeing potatoes almost their sole sustenance; and all this time Dean's family had plenty of every thing they wanted, and Dean just jogged on, as easy as could be; hardly ever stirring from home, except on 'lection days; wasting a great deal of time, too, (so Silas thinks,) "helping the women folks." "But some people get all the luck."

These and similar reflections seem to be scarcely ever absent from the mind of Silas Ashburn, producing any but favourable results upon his character and temper. He cannot be brought to believe that Dean has made more money by splitting rails in the winter than his more enterprising neighbour by hunting deer, skilful and successful as he is. He will not notice that Dean often buys his venison for half the money he has earned while Silas was hunting it. He has never observed, that while his own sallow helpmate goes barefoot and bonnetless to the brush-heap to fill her ragged apron with miserable fuel, the cold wind careering through her scanty covering, Mrs. Dean sits by a good fire, amply provided by her careful husband, patching for the twentieth time his great overcoat; and that by the time his Betsey has kindled her poor blaze, and sits cowering over it, shaking with ague, Mrs. Dean, with well-swept hearth, is busied in preparing her husband's comfortable supper.

These things Silas does not and will not see; and he ever resents fiercely any hint, however kindly and cautiously given, that the steady exercise of his own ability for labour, and a *little* more thrift on the part of his wife, would soon set all things right.

When he spends a whole night "'coon-hunting," and is obliged to sleep half the next day, and feels good for nothing the day after, it is impossible to convince him that the "varmint" had better been left to cumber the ground, and the two or three dollars that the expedition cost him been bestowed in the purchase of a blanket.

"A blanket!" he would exclaim angrily; "don't be puttin' sich uppish notions into my folks' heads! Let 'em make comfortables out o' their old gowns, and if that don't do, let 'em sleep in their day-clothes, as I do! Nobody needn't suffer with a great fire to sleep by."

The children of this house are just what one would expect from such training. Labouring beyond their strength at such times as it suits their father to work, they have nevertheless abundant opportunity for idleness; and as the mother scarcely attempts to control them, they usually lounge listlessly by the fireside, or bask in the sunshine, when Ashburn is absent; and as a natural consequence of this irregular mode of life, the whole family are frequently prostrate with agues, suffering every variety of wretchedness, while there is perhaps no other case of disease in the neighbourhood. Then comes the two-fold evil of a long period of inactivity, and a proportionately long doctor's bill; and as Silas is strictly honest, and means to wrong no man of his due, the scanty comforts of the convalescents are cut down to almost nothing, and their recovery sadly delayed, that the heavy expenses of illness may be provided for. This is some of poor Ashburn's "bad luck."

One of the greatest temptations to our friend Silas, and to most of his class, is a bee-hunt. Neither deer, nor 'coons, nor prairie-hens, nor even bears, prove half as powerful enemies to any thing like regular business, as do these little thrifty vagrants of the forest. The slightest hint of a bee-tree will entice Silas Ashburn and his sons from the most profitable job of the season, even though the defection is sure to result in entire loss of the offered advantage; and if the hunt prove successful, the luscious spoil is generally too tempting to allow of any care for the future, so long as the "sweet'nin" can be persuaded to last. "It costs nothing," will poor Mrs. Ashburn observe, "let 'em enjoy it. It isn't often

we have such good luck." As to the cost, close computation might lead to a different conclusion; but the Ashburns are no calculators.

It was on one of the lovely mornings of our ever lovely autumn, so early that the sun had scarcely touched the tops of the still verdant forest, that Silas Ashburn and his eldest son sallied forth for a day's chopping on the newly-purchased land of a rich settler, who had been but a few months among us. The tall form of the father, lean and gaunt as the very image of Famine, derived little grace from the rags which streamed from the elbows of his almost sleeveless coat, or flapped round the tops of his heavy boots, as he strode across the long causeway that formed the communication from his house to the dry land. Poor Joe's costume showed, if possible, a still greater need of the aid of that useful implement, the needle. His mother is one who thinks little of the ancient proverb which commends the stitch in time; and the clothing under her care sometimes falls in pieces, seam by seam, for want of the occasional aid is rendered more especially necessary by the slightness of the original sewing; so that the brisk breeze of the morning gave the poor boy no faint resemblance to a tall young aspen,

"With all its leaves fast fluttering, all at once."

The little conversation which passed between the father and son was such as necessarily makes up much of the talk of the poor,—turning on the difficulties and disappointments of life, and the expedients by which there may seem some slight hope of eluding these disagreeables.

"If we hadn't had sich bad luck this summer," said Mr. Ashburn, "losing that heifer, and the pony, and them three hogs,—all in that plaguy spring-hole, too,—I thought to have bought that timbered forty of Dean. It would have squared out my farm jist about right."

"The pony didn't die in the spring-hole, father," said Joe.

"No, he did not, but he got his death there, for all. He never stopped shiverin' from the time he fell in. *You* thought he had the agur, but I know'd well enough what ailded him; but I wasn't a goin' to let Dean know, because he'd ha' thought himself so

blam'd cunning, after all he'd said to me about that spring-hole. If the agur could kill, Joe, we'd all ha' been dead long ago."

Joe sighed,—a sigh of assent. They walked on musingly.

"This is going to be a good job of Keene's," continued Mr. Ashburn, turning to a brighter theme, as they crossed the road and struck into the "timbered land," on their way to the scene of the day's operations. "He has bought three eighties, all lying close together, and he'll want as much as one forty cleared right off; and I've a good notion to take the fencin' of it as well as the choppin'. He's got plenty of money, and they say he don't shave quite so close as some. But I tell you, Joe, if I do take the job, you must turn to like a catamount, for I ain't a-going to make a nigger o' myself, and let my children do nothing but eat."

"Well, father," responded Joe, whose pale face gave token of any thing but high living, "I'll do what I can; but you know I never work two days at choppin' but what I have the agur like sixty,—and a feller can't work when he's got the agur."

"Not while the fit's on, to be sure," said the father; "but I've worked many an afternoon after my fit was over, when my head felt as big as a half-bushel, and my hands would ha' sizzed if I'd put 'em in water. Poor folks has got to work——but, Joe! if there isn't bees, by golley! I wonder if any body's been a baitin' for 'em? Stop! hush! watch which way they go!"

And with breathless interest—forgetful of all troubles, past, present, and future—they paused to observe the capricious wheelings and flittings of the little cluster, as they tried every flower on which the sun shone, or returned again and again to such as suited best their discriminating taste. At length, after a weary while, one suddenly rose into the air with a loud whizz, and after balancing a moment on a level with the tree-tops, darted off, like a well-sent arrow, toward the east, followed instantly by the whole busy company, till not a loiterer remained.

"Well! if this isn't luck!" exclaimed Ashburn, exultingly; "they make right for Keene's land! We'll have 'em! go ahead, Joe, and keep your eye on 'em!"

Joe obeyed so well in both points, that he not only outran his father, but very soon turned a summerset over a gnarled root or

grub which lay in his path. This *faux pas* nearly demolished one side of his face, and what remained of his jacket sleeve, while his father, not quite so heedless, escaped falling, but tore his boot almost off with what he called "a contwisted stub of the toe."

But these were trifling inconveniences, and only taught them to use a little more caution in their eagerness. They followed on, unweariedly; crossed several fences, and threaded much of Mr. Keene's tract of forest-land, scanning with practised eye every decayed tree, whether standing or prostrate, until at length, in the side of a gigantic but leafless oak, they espied, some forty feet from the ground, the "sweet home" of the immense swarm whose scouts had betrayed their hiding-place.

"The Indians have been here;" said Ashburn; "you see they've felled this saplin' agin the bee-tree, so as they could climb up to the hole; but the red devils have been disturbed afore they had time to dig it out. If they'd had axes to cut down the big tree, they wouldn't have left a smitchin o' honey, they're such tarnal thieves!"

Mr. Ashburn's ideas of morality were much shocked at the thought of the dishonesty of the Indians, who, as is well known, have no rights of any kind; but considering himself as first finder, the lawful proprietor of this much-coveted treasure, gained too without the trouble of a protracted search, or the usual amount of baiting, and burning of honeycombs, he lost no time in taking possession after the established mode.

To cut his initials with his axe on the trunk of the bee-tree, and to make *blazes* on several of the trees he had passed, to serve as way-marks to the fortunate spot, detained him but few minutes; and with many a cautious noting of the surrounding localities, and many a charge to Joe "not to say nothing to nobody," Silas turned his steps homeward, musing on the important fact that he had had good luck for once, and planning important business quite foreign to the day's chopping.

Now it so happened that Mr. Keene, who is a restless old gentleman, and, moreover, quite green in the dignity of a land-holder, thought proper to turn his horse's head, for this particular morning ride, directly towards these same "three eighties," on which

he had engaged Ashburn and his son to commence the important work of clearing. Mr. Keene is low of stature, rather globular in contour, and exceedingly parrot-nosed; wearing, moreover, a face red enough to lead one to suppose he had made his money as a dealer in claret; but, in truth, one of the kindest of men, in spite of a little quickness of temper. He is profoundly versed in the art and mystery of store-keeping, and as profoundly ignorant of all that must sooner or later be learned by every resident land-owner of the western country.

Thus much being premised, we shall hardly wonder that our good old friend felt exceedingly aggrieved at meeting Silas Ashburn and the "lang-legged chiel" Joe, (who has grown longer with every shake of ague,) on the way *from* his tract, instead of *to* it.

"What in the world's the matter now!" began Mr. Keene, rather testily. "Are you never going to begin that work?"

"I don't know but I shall;" was the cool reply of Ashburn; "I can't begin it to-day, though."

"And why not, pray, when I've been so long waiting?"

"Because, I've got something else that must be done first. You don't think your work is all the work there is in the world, do you?"

Mr. Keene was almost too angry to reply, but he made an effort to say, "When am I to expect you, then?"

"Why, I guess we'll come on in a day or two, and then I'll bring both the boys."

So saying, and not dreaming of having been guilty of an incivility, Mr. Ashburn passed on, intent only on his bee-tree.

Mr. Keene could not help looking after the ragged pair for a moment, and he muttered angrily as he turned away, "Aye! pride and beggary go together in this confounded new country! You feel very independent, no doubt, but I'll try if I can't find somebody that wants money."

And Mr. Keene's pony, as if sympathizing with his master's vexation, started off at a sharp, passionate trot, which he has learned, no doubt, under the habitual influence of the spicy temper of his rider.

To find labourers who wanted money, or who would own that

they wanted it, was at that time no easy task. Our poorer neighbours have been so little accustomed to value household comforts, that the opportunity to obtain them presents but feeble incitement to that continuous industry which is usually expected of one who works in the employ of another. However, it happened in this case that Mr. Keene's star was in the ascendant, and the woods resounded, ere long, under the sturdy strokes of several choppers.

The Ashburns, in tne mean time, set themselves busily at work to make due preparations for the expedition which they had planned for the following night. They felt, as does every one who finds a bee-tree in this region, that the prize was their own —that nobody else had the slightest claim to its rich stores; yet the gathering in of the spoils was to be performed, according to the invariable custom where the country is much settled, in the silence of night, and with every precaution of secrecy. . This seems inconsistent, yet such is the fact.

The remainder of the "lucky" day and the whole of the succeeding one, passed in scooping troughs for the reception of the honey,—tedious work at best, but unusually so in this instance, because several of the family were prostrate with the ague. Ashburn's anxiety lest some of his customary bad luck should intervene between discovery and possession, made him more impatient and harsh than usual; and the interior of that comfortless cabin would have presented to a chance visiter, who knew not of the golden hopes which cheered its inmates, an aspect of unmitigated wretchedness. Mrs. Ashburn sat almost in the fire, with a tattered hood on her head and the relics of a bed-quilt wrapped about her person; while the emaciated limbs of the baby on her lap,—two years old, yet unweaned,—seemed almost to reach the floor, so preternaturally were they lengthened by the stretches of a four months' ague. Two of the boys lay in the trundle-bed, which was drawn as near to the fire as possible; and every spare article of clothing that the house afforded was thrown over them, in the vain attempt to warm their shivering frames. "Stop your whimperin', can't ye!" said Ashburn, as he hewed away with hatchet and jack-knife; "you'll be hot enough before

long." And when the fever came his words were more than verified.

Two nights had passed before the preparations were completed. Ashburn and such of his boys as could work, had laboured indefatigably at the troughs, and Mrs. Ashburn had thrown away the milk, and the few other stores which cumbered her small supply of household utensils, to free as many as possible for the grand occasion. This third day had been "well day" to most of the invalids, and after the moon had risen to light them through the dense wood, the family set off, in high spirits, on their long, dewy walk. They had passed the causeway, and were turning from the highway into the skirts of the forest, when they were accosted by a stranger, a young man in a hunter's dress, evidently a traveller, and one who knew nothing of the place or its inhabitants, as Mr. Ashburn ascertained, to his entire satisfaction, by the usual number of queries. The stranger, a handsome youth of one or two and twenty, had that frank, joyous air which takes so well with us Wolverines; and after he had fully satisfied our bee-hunter's curiosity, he seemed disposed to ask some questions in his turn. One of the first of these related to the moving cause of the procession and their voluminous display of *containers*.

"Why, we're goin' straight to a bee-tree that I lit upon two or three days ago, and if you've a mind to, you may go 'long, and welcome. It's a real peeler, I tell ye! There's a hundred and fifty weight of honey in it, if there's a pound."

The young traveller waited no second invitation. His light knapsack was but small incumbrance, and he took upon himself the weight of several troughs, that seemed too heavy for the weaker members of the expedition. They walked on at a rapid and steady pace for a good half hour, over paths which were none of the smoothest, and only here and there lighted by the moonbeams. The mother and children were but ill fitted for the exertion, but Aladdin, on his midnight way to the wondrous vault of treasure, would as soon have thought of complaining of fatigue.

Who then shall describe the astonishment, the almost breathless rage of Silas Ashburn,—the bitter disappointment of the rest,—when they found, instead of the bee-tree, a great gap in the dense

forest, and the bright moon shining on the shattered fragments of the immense oak that had contained their prize? The poor children, fainting with toil now that the stimulus was gone, threw themselves on the ground; and Mrs. Ashburn, seating her wasted form on a huge branch, burst into tears.

"It's all one!" exclaimed Ashburn, when at length he could find words; "it's all alike! this is just my luck! It ain't none of my neighbours, work, though! They know better than to be so mean! It's the rich! Them that begrudges the poor man the breath of life!" And he cursed bitterly and with clenched teeth, whoever had robbed him of his right.

"Don't cry, Betsey," he continued; "let's go home. I'll find out who has done this, and I'll let 'em know there's law for the poor man as well as the rich. Come along, young 'uns, and stop your blubberin', and let them splinters alone!" The poor little things were trying to gather up some of the fragments to which the honey still adhered, but their father was too angry to be kind.

"Was the tree on your own land?" now inquired the young stranger, who had stood by in sympathizing silence during this scene.

"No! but that don't make any difference. The man that found it first, and marked it, had a right to it afore the President of the United States, and that I'll let 'em know, if it costs me my farm. It's on old Keene's land, and I shouldn't wonder if the old miser had done it himself,—but I'll let him know what's the law in Michi*gan!*"

"Mr. Keene a miser!" exclaimed the young stranger, rather hastily.

"Why, what do *you* know about him?"

"O! nothing!—that is, nothing very particular—but I have heard him well spoken of. What I was going to say was, that I fear you will not find the law able to do any thing for you. If the tree was on another person's property——"

"Property! that's just so much as you know about it!" replied Ashburn, angrily. "I tell ye I know the law well enough, and I know the honey was mine—and old Keene shall know it too, if he's the man that stole it."

The stranger politely forbore further reply, and the whole

party walked on in sad silence till they reached the village road, when the young stranger left them with a kindly "good night!"

It was soon after an early breakfast on the morning which succeeded poor Ashburn's disappointment, that Mr. Keene, attended by his lovely orphan niece, Clarissa Bensley, was engaged in his little court-yard, tending with paternal care the brilliant array of autumnal flowers which graced its narrow limits. Beds in size and shape nearly resembling patty-pans, were filled to overflowing with dahlias, china-asters and marigolds, while the walks which surrounded them, daily "swept with a woman's neatness," set off to the best advantage these resplendent children of Flora. A vine-hung porch, that opened upon the miniature Paradise, was lined with bird-cages of all sizes, and on a yard-square grass-plot stood the tin cage of a squirrel, almost too fat to be lively.

Mr. Keene was childless, and consoled himself as childless people are apt to do if they are wise, by taking into favour, in addition to his destitute niece, as many troublesome pets as he could procure. His wife, less philosophical, expended her superfluous energies upon a multiplication of household cares which her ingenuity alone could have devised within a domain like a nut-shell. Such rubbing and polishing—such arranging and rearranging of useless nick-nacks, had never yet been known in these utilitarian regions. And, what seemed amusing enough, Mrs. Keene, whose time passed in laborious nothings, often reproved her lawful lord very sharply for wasting *his* precious hours upon birds and flowers, squirrels and guinea-pigs, to say nothing of the turkeys and the magnificent peacock, which screamed at least half of every night, so that his master was fain to lock him up in an outhouse, for fear the neighbours should kill him in revenge for the murder of their sleep. These forms of solace Mrs. Keene often condemned as "really ridic'lous," yet she cleaned the bird-cages with indefatigable punctuality, and seemed never happier than when polishing with anxious care the bars of the squirrel's tread-mill. But there was one never-dying subject of debate between this worthy couple,—the company and services of the fair Clarissa, who was equally the darling of both,

and superlatively useful in every department which claimed the attention of either. How the maiden, light-footed as she was, ever contrived to satisfy both uncle and aunt, seemed really mysterious. It was, " Mr. Keene, don't keep Clary wasting her time there when I've *so much* to do!"—or, on the other hand, " My dear! do send Clary out to help *me* a little! I'm sure she's been stewing there long enough!" And Clary, though she could not perhaps be in two places at once, certainly accomplished as much as if she could.

On the morning of which we speak, the young lady, having risen very early, and brushed and polished to her aunt's content, was now busily engaged in performing the various behests of her uncle, a service much more to her taste. She was as completely at home among birds and flowers as a poet or a Peri; and not Ariel himself, (of whom I dare say she had never heard,) accomplished with more grace his gentle spiriting. After all was " perform'd to point,"—when no dahlia remained unsupported,—no cluster of many-hued asters without its neat hoop,—when no intrusive weed could be discerned, even through Mr. Keene's spectacles,—Clarissa took the opportunity to ask if she might take the pony for a ride.

" To see those poor Ashburns, uncle."

" They're a lazy, impudent set, Clary."

" But they are all sick, uncle; almost every one of the family down with ague. Do let me go and carry them something. I hear they are completely destitute of comforts."

" And so they ought to be, my dear," said Mr. Keene, who could not forget what he considered Ashburn's impertinence.

But his habitual kindness prevailed, and he concluded his remonstrance (after giving voice to some few remarks which would not have gratified the Ashburns particularly,) by saddling the pony himself, arranging Clarissa's riding-dress with all the assiduity of a gallant cavalier, and giving into her hand, with her neat silver-mounted whip, a little basket, well crammed by his wife's kind care with delicacies for the invalids. No wonder that he looked after her with pride as she rode off! There are few prettier girls than the bright-eyed Clarissa.

When the pony reached the log-causeway,—just where the thick copse of witch-hazel skirts Mr. Ashburn's moist domain,—some unexpected occurrence is said to have startled, not the sober pony, but his very sensitive rider; and it has been asserted that the pony stirred not from the said hazel screen for a longer time than it would take to count a hundred, very deliberately. What faith is to be attached to this rumour, the historian ventures not to determine. It may be relied on as a fact, however, that a strong arm led the pony over the slippery corduroy, but no further; for Clarissa Bensley cantered alone up the green slope which leads to Mr. Ashburn's door.

"How are you this morning, Mrs. Ashburn?" asked the young visitant as she entered the wretched den, her little basket on her arm, her sweet face all flushed, and her eyes more than half-suffused with tears,—the effect of the keen morning wind, we suppose.

"Law sakes alive!" was the reply, "I ain't no how. I'm clear tuckered out with these young 'uns. They've had the agur already this morning, and they're as cross as bear-cubs."

"Mä!" screamed one, as if in confirmation of the maternal remark, "I want some tea!"

"Tea! I ha'n't got no tea, and you know that well enough!"

"Well, give me a piece o' sweetcake then, and a pickle."

"The sweetcake was gone long ago, and I ha'n't nothing to make more—so shut your head!" And as Clarissa whispered to the poor pallid child that she would bring him some if he would be a good boy and not tease his mother, Mrs. Ashburn produced, from a barrel of similar delicacies, a yellow cucumber, something less than a foot long, "pickled" in whiskey and water—and this the child began devouring eagerly.

Miss Bensley now set out upon the table the varied contents of her basket. "This honey," she said, showing some as limpid as water, "was found a day or two ago in uncle's woods—wild honey—isn't it beautiful?"

Mrs. Ashburn fixed her eyes on it without speaking, but her husband, who just then came in, did not command himself so far. "Where did you say you got that honey?" he asked.

"In our woods," repeated Clarissa; "I never saw such quantities; and a good deal of it as clear and beautiful as this."

"I thought as much!" said Ashburn angrily; "and now, Clary Bensley," he added, "you'll just take that cursed honey back to your uncle, and tell him to keep it, and eat it, and I hope it will choke him! and if I live, I'll make him rue the day he ever touched it."

Miss Bensley gazed on him, lost in astonishment. She could think of nothing but that he must have gone suddenly mad, and this idea made her instinctively hasten her steps toward the pony.

"Well! if you won't take it, I'll send it after ye!" cried Ashburn, who had lashed himself into a rage; and he hurled the little jar, with all the force of his powerful arm, far down the path by which Clarissa was about to depart, while his poor wife tried to restrain him with a piteous "Oh, father! don't! don't!"

Then, recollecting himself a little,—for he is far from being habitually brutal,—he made an awkward apology to the frightened girl.

"I ha'n't nothing agin *you*, Miss Bensley; you've always been kind to me and mine; but that old devil of an uncle of yours, that can't bear to let a poor man live,—I'll larn him who he's got to deal with! Tell him to look out, for he'll have reason!"

He held the pony while Clarissa mounted, as if to atone for his rudeness to herself; but he ceased not to repeat his denunciations against Mr. Keene as long as she was within hearing. As she paced over the logs, Ashburn, his rage much cooled by this ebullition, stood looking after her.

"I swan!" he exclaimed; "if there ain't that very feller that went with us to the bee-tree, leading Clary Bensley's horse over the cross-way!"

Clarissa felt obliged to repeat to her uncle the rude threats which had so much terrified her; and it needed but this to confirm Mr. Keene's suspicious dislike of Ashburn, whom he had already learned to regard as one of the worst specimens of western character that had yet crossed his path. He had often felt the vexations of his new position to be almost intolerable, and was disposed to imagine himself the predestined victim of all the ill-

will and all the impositions of the neighbourhood. It unfortunately happened, about this particular time, that he had been more than usually visited with disasters which are too common in a new country to be much regarded by those who know what they mean. His fences had been thrown down, his corn-field robbed, and even the lodging-place of the peacock forcibly attempted. But from the moment he discovered that Ashburn had a grudge against him, he thought neither of unruly oxen, mischievous boys, nor exasperated neighbours, but concluded that the one unlucky house in the swamp was the ever-welling fountain of all this bitterness. He had not yet been long enough among us to discern how much our "bark is waur than our bite."

And, more unfortunate still, from the date of this unlucky morning call, (I have long considered morning calls particularly unlucky), the fair Clarissa seemed to have lost all her sprightliness. She shunned her usual haunts, or if she took a walk, or a short ride, she was sure to return sadder than she went. Her uncle noted the change immediately, but forbore to question her, though he pointed out the symptoms to his more obtuse lady, with a request that she would "find out what Clary wanted." In the performance of this delicate duty, Mrs. Keene fortunately limited herself to the subjects of health and new clothes,—so that Clarissa, though at first a little fluttered, answered very satisfactorily without stretching her conscience.

"Perhaps it's young company, my dear," continued the good woman; "to be sure there's not much of that as yet; but you never seemed to care for it when we lived at L——. You used to sit as contented over your work or your book, in the long evenings, with nobody but your uncle and me, and Charles Darwin, —why can't you now?"

"So I can, dear aunt," said Clarissa; and she spoke the truth so warmly that her aunt was quite satisfied.

It was on a very raw and gusty evening, not long after the occurrences we have noted, that Mr. Keene, with his handkerchief carefully wrapped round his chin, sallied forth after dark, on an expedition to the post-office. He was thinking how vexatious it was—how like every thing else in this disorganized, or

rather unorganized new country, that the weekly mail should not be obliged to arrive at regular hours, and those early enough to allow of one's getting one's letters before dark. As he proceeded he became aware of the approach of two persons, and though it was too dark to distinguish faces, he heard distinctly the dreaded tones of Silas Ashburn.

"No! I found you were right enough there! I couldn't get at him that way; but I'll pay him for it yet!"

He lost the reply of the other party in this iniquitous scheme, in the rushing of the wild wind which hurried him on his course; but he had heard enough! He made out to reach the office, and receiving his paper, and hastening desperately homeward, had scarcely spirits even to read the price-current, (though he did mechanically glance at that corner of the "Trumpet of Commerce,") before he retired to bed in meditative sadness; feeling quite unable to await the striking of nine on the kitchen clock, which, in all ordinary circumstances, "toll'd the hour for retiring."

It is really surprising the propensity which young people have for sitting up late! Here was Clarissa Bensley, who was so busy all day that one would have thought she might be glad to retire with the chickens,—here she was, sitting in her aunt's great rocking-chair by the remains of the kitchen fire, at almost ten o'clock at night! And such a night too! The very roaring of the wind was enough to have affrighted a stouter heart than hers, yet she scarcely seemed even to hear it! And how lonely she must have been! Mr. and Mrs. Keene had been gone an hour, and in all the range of bird-cages that lined the room, not a feather was stirring, unless it might have been the green eyebrow of an old parrot, who was slily watching the fireside with one optic, while the other pretended to be fast asleep. And what was old Poll watching? We shall be obliged to tell tales.

There was another chair besides the great rocking-chair,—a high-backed chair of the olden time; and this second chair was drawn up quite near the first, and on the back of the tall antiquity leaned a young gentleman. This must account for Clary's

not being terrified, and for the shrewd old parrot's staring so knowingly.

"I will wait no longer," said the stranger, in a low, but very decided tone; (and as he speaks, we recognise the voice of the young hunter.) "You are too timid, Clarissa, and you don't do your uncle justice. To be sure he was most unreasonably angry when we parted, and I am ashamed to think that I was angry too. To-morrow I will see him and tell him so; and I shall tell him too, little trembler, that I have you on my side; and we shall see if together we cannot persuade him to forget and forgive."

This, and much more that we shall not betray, was said by the tall young gentleman, who, now that his cap was off, showed brow and eyes such as are apt to go a good way in convincing young ladies; while Miss Bensley seemed partly to acquiesce, and partly to cling to her previous fears of her uncle's resentment against his former protégé, which, first excited by some trifling offence, had been rendered serious by the pride of the young man and the pepperiness of the old one.

When the moment came which Clarissa insisted should be the very last of the stranger's stay, some difficulty occurred in unbolting the kitchen door, and Miss Bensley proceeded with her guest through an open passage-way to the front part of the house, when she undid the front door, and dismissed him with a strict charge to tie up the gate just as he found it, lest some unlucky chance should realize Mr. Keene's fears of nocturnal invasion. And we must leave our perplexed heroine standing, in meditative mood, candle in hand, in the very centre of the little parlour, which served both for entrance-hall and *salon*.

We have seen that Mr. Keene's nerves had received a terrible shock on this fated evening, and it is certain that for a man of sober imagination, his dreams were terrific. He saw Ashburn, covered from crown to sole with a buzzing shroud of bees, trampling on his flower-beds, tearing up his honey-suckles root and branch, and letting his canaries and Java sparrows out of their cages; and, as his eyes recoiled from this horrible scene, they encountered the shambling form of Joe, who, besides aiding and abet-

ting in these enormities, was making awful strides, axe in hand, toward the sanctuary of the pea-fowls.

He awoke with a cry of horror, and found his bed-room full of smoke. Starting up in agonized alarm, he awoke Mrs. Keene, and half-dressed, by the red light which glimmered around them, they rushed together to Clarissa's chamber. It was empty. To find the stairs was the next thought, but at the very top they met the dreaded bee-finder armed with a prodigious club!

"Oh mercy! don't murder us!" shrieked Mrs. Keene, falling on her knees; while her husband, whose capsicum was completely roused, began pummelling Ashburn as high as he could reach, bestowing on him at the same time, in no very choice terms, his candid opinion as to the propriety of setting people's houses on fire, by way of revenge.

"Why, you're both as crazy as loons!" was Mr. Ashburn's polite exclamation, as he held off Mr. Keene at arm's length. "I was comin' up o' purpose to tell you that you needn't be frightened. It's only the ruff o' the shanty there,—the kitchen, as you call it."

"And what have you done with Clarissa?"—"Ay! where's my niece?" cried the distracted pair.

"Where is she? why, down stairs to be sure, takin' care o' the traps they throw'd out o' the shanty. I was out a 'coon-hunting, and see the light, but I was so far off that they'd got it pretty well down before I got here. That 'ere young spark o' Clary's worked like a beaver, I tell ye!"

It must not be supposed that one half of Ashburn's hasty explanation "penetrated the interior" of his hearers' heads. They took in the idea of Clary's safety, but as for the rest, they concluded it only an effort to mystify them as to the real cause of the disaster.

"You need not attempt," solemnly began Mr. Keene, "you need not think to make me believe, that you are not the man that set my house on fire. I know your revengeful temper; I have heard of your threats, and you shall answer for all, sir! before you're a day older!"

Ashburn seemed struck dumb, between his involuntary respect for Mr. Keene's age and character, and the contemptuous anger

with which his accusations filled him. "Well! I swan!" said he after a pause; "but here comes Clary; *she's* got common sense; ask her how the fire happened."

"It's all over now, uncle," she exclaimed, almost breathless; "it has not done so *very* much damage."

"Damage!" said Mrs. Keene, dolefully; "we shall never get things clean again while the world stands!"

"And where are my birds?" inquired the old gentleman.

"All safe—quite safe; we moved them into the parlour."

"We! who, pray?"

"Oh! the neighbours came, you know, uncle; and—Mr. Ashburn—"

"Give the devil his due," interposed Ashburn; "you know very well that the whole concern would have gone if it hadn't been for that young feller."

"What young fellow? where?"

"Why here," said Silas, pulling forward our young stranger; "this here chap."

"Young man," began Mr. Keene,—but at the moment, up came somebody with a light, and while Clarissa retreated behind Mr. Ashburn, the stranger was recognised by her aunt and uncle as Charles Darwin.

"Charles! what on earth brought you here?"

"Ask Clary," said Ashburn, with grim jocoseness.

Mr. Keene turned mechanically to obey, but Clarissa had disappeared.

"Well! I guess I can tell you something about it, if nobody else won't," said Ashburn; "I'm something of a Yankee, and it's my notion that there was some sparkin' a goin' on in your kitchen, and that somehow or other the young folks managed to set it a-fire."

The old folks looked more puzzled than ever. "*Do* speak, Charles," said Mr. Keene; "what *does* it all mean? Did you set my house on fire?"

"I'm afraid I must have had some hand in it, sir," said Charles, whose self-possession seemed quite to have deserted him.

"You!" exclaimed Mr. Keene; "and I've been laying it to this man!"

"Yes! you know'd I owed you a spite, on account o' that plaguy bee-tree," said Ashburn; "a guilty conscience needs no accuser. But you was much mistaken if you thought I was sich a bloody-minded villain as to burn your gimcrackery for that! If I could have paid you for it, fair and even, I'd ha' done it with all my heart and soul. But I don't set men's houses a-fire when I get mad at 'em."

"But you threatened vengeance," said Mr. Keene.

"So I did, but that was when I expected to get it by law, though; and this here young man knows that, if he'd only speak."

Thus adjured, Charles did speak, and so much to the purpose that it did not take many minutes to convince Mr. Keene that Ashburn's evil-mindedness was bounded by the limits of the law, that precious privilege of the Wolverine. But there was still the mystery of Charles's apparition, and in order to its full unravelment, the blushing Clarissa had to be enticed from her hiding-place, and brought to confession. And then it was made clear that she, with all her innocent looks, was the moving cause of the mighty mischief. She it was who encouraged Charles to believe that her uncle's anger would not last for ever; and this had led Charles to venture into the neighbourhood; and it was while consulting together, (on this particular point, of course,) that they managed to set the kitchen curtain on fire, and then—the reader knows the rest.

These things occupied some time in explaining,—but they were at length, by the aid of words and more eloquent blushes, made so clear, that Mr. Keene concluded, not only to new roof the kitchen, but to add a very pretty wing to one side of the house. And at the present time, the steps of Charles Darwin, when he returns from a surveying tour, seek the little gate as naturally as if he had never lived any where else. And the sweet face of Clarissa is always there, ready to welcome him, though she still finds plenty of time to keep in order the complicated affairs of both uncle and aunt.

And how goes life with our friends the Ashburns? Mr. Keene has done his very best to atone for his injurious estimate of Wolverine honour, by giving constant employment to Ashburn and his

sons, and owning himself always the obliged party, without which concession all he could do would avail nothing. And Mrs. Keene and Clarissa have been unwearied in their kind attentions to the family, supplying them with so many comforts that most of them have got rid of the ague, in spite of themselves. The house has assumed so cheerful an appearance that I could scarcely recognise it for the same squalid den it had often made my heart ache to look upon. As I was returning from my last visit there, I encountered Mr. Ashburn, and remarked to him how very comfortable they seemed.

"Yes," he replied; "I've had pretty good luck lately; but I'm a goin' to pull up stakes and move to Wisconsin. I think I can do better, further West."

IDLE PEOPLE.

THOSE who never work—those who number among their most precious privileges a complete exemption from not only the spur of necessity, but the pressure of duty—must find it hard to believe that there are people in the world whose destiny it seems to be to work all the time. Yet no—these are the very beings who think God has so ordered the lot of a portion of his children, in contrast to the all-embracing beneficence of his providence in other respects. These might be called the butterflies of the earth, if the butterfly was not an established emblem of *soul*. Their self-complacency is much soothed by the conviction that they are of "the porcelain clay of human kind," and they are thankful—or rather, glad—that there *is* a coarser race, to whom hard work and hard fare are well suited.

The fate of these two divisions of mankind is, after all, much more justly balanced than either portion is apt to imagine. There is a universal necessity for labour, and those who obstinately close their understandings against this fact, whether rich or poor, inevitably join the class of sufferers sooner or later. There is nothing in which what we call *fate* is more impartial. The poor are admonished by destitution, and the rich by ill health—the mere idler by ennui, and the scheming sharper by disappointment and disgrace. Yet this same universal necessity is not more evident than is the undying effort to elude it. After centuries of warning, the struggle still continues; its energy sustained sometimes by pride, sometimes by a downright love of ease, so blind that it looks no farther than the present moment. Thus much of the outer and obvious world—a theatre whose actors, from being, or supposing themselves to be, "th' observed of all observers," have fallen into many unnatural views and artificial habits of

life, all tending to the one darling end of drawing a broad line of distinction between themselves and the "common" and the "vulgar."

In these western wilds, where nature, scarce redeemed from primeval barbarism, seems to demand, with an especial earnestness, the best aid of her denizens, and where she pays with gold every drop that falls on her bosom from the brow of labour, there may be danger sometimes, methinks, danger of falling into an error of an opposite character. There is so much work to be done, and so few people to do it, that the idea of labour is apt to absorb the entire area of the mind, to the exclusion of some other ideas not only useful but pleasant withal, and humanizing, and softening, and calculated to cherish the higher attributes of our nature. So far is this carried that idleness is emphatically *the* vice for which public opinion reserves its severest frown, and in whose behalf no voice ventures an apologetic word. If a man drink, he may reform; even if he should steal, we permit him to rebuild his character upon repentance; but if he be lazy, we have neither hope nor charity.

Still, even among us, there are those to whose imagination the *dolce far niente* is irresistible; and it must be confessed that they form a class which is not likely to raise the reputation of the followers of pleasure. They have one thing in common with the fashionables of the earth—a determination to eschew every conceivable form of labour; but, however dignified this trait may appear when set off by an imposing *hauteur* and an elegant costume, it makes but a sorry figure in the woods, where the prevailing tone is far different. Yet these kindred souls are as incorrigible as their betters; and, like them, will often perform as much labour, and exert as much ingenuity in avoiding work, as would, if differently directed, suffice to place them in an independent and honourable position.

It must be owned that this land of hard work presents a thousand temptations to idleness. Not to mention the sacrifice with which we begin—the giving up of all that gave life a rosy or a golden tint in the older world—there may be other excuses for a longing after amusement, in minds of a certain class. There is an aspect of severe effort—of closeness—of grinding care in

the general constitution of society; the natural consequence of the fact that poverty, or at least narrow circumstances at home, was the impetus that drove nine-tenths of the population westward; and this aspect being in striking opposition to the free, glowing, and abundant one which characterizes unworn nature in this scarce-trodden region, suggests and connects with labour a certain idea of slavery—of confinement; and creates a proportionate desire for all the liberty that so narrow a fate will permit. He who possesses abundant leisure for amusment, will perhaps be heard to complain that it is hard to find; but he who is every hour spurred on by necessity to the most toilsome employments, cannot but snatch with delight every available form of recreation; and will be apt to devote to the coveted indulgence hours which must be dearly purchased by the sufferings of the future. Let us judge him with a charity which we may hardly be disposed to exercise towards his prototype in high places.

So unpopular, as we have said, so contrary to the prevailing spirit, is this desire for amusement, that those among us who are so unfortunate as to be born with something of a poetical temperament—which delights in quiet musings, long rambles in the woods, and other forms of idleness—generally disguise to themselves and try to disguise to others the true nature of this propensity, by contriving many new and ingenious ways of earning money, all agreeing in one point—a determined avoidance of every thing that is usually called *work*.

In the early spring time, while a thin covering of very fragile ice still encrusts the marshes, there may be seen around their borders a tangled fringe of seemingly bare bushes. On nearer approach these bushes are found stripped indeed as to their upper branches, but garnished at the water's edge with berries of the brightest coral, each shrined separately in a little ring of crystal. These are the most delicate and highly prized cranberries; mellowed, not wilted, by the severest frosts, and now peeping through their icy veil, and glowing in the first warm rays of approaching spring.

These are an irresistible temptation to our fashionable of the woods. Armed in boots, not seven-leagued, but thick as the seven-fold shield of Ajax, he plunges into the crackling pool; and

there, as long as a berry is to be found, he stands or wades; snatching, perhaps, a shilling's worth of cranberries, and a six months' rheumatism. No matter; this is not *work*.

You may see him next, if you are an early riser, setting off, at peep of dawn, on a fishing expedition. He winds through the dreary woods, yawning portentously, and stretching as if he were emulous of the height of the hickory trees. Dexterously swaying his long rod, he follows the little stream till it is lost in the bosom of the woodland lake; if unsuccessful from the bank, he seeks the frail skiff, which is the common property of laborious idlers like himself, and, pushing off shore, sits dreaming under the sun's wilting beams, until he has secured a supply for the day. Home again—an irregular meal at any time of day—and he goes to bed with the ague; but he murmurs not, for fishing is not *work*.

Here is a strawberry field—well may it claim the name! It is a wide fallow which has been ploughed late in the last autumn, and is now lying in ridges to court the fertilizing sunbeams. It is already clothed, though scantily, with a luxuriant growth of fresh verdure, and among, and through, and over all, glows the rich crimson of the field strawberry—the ruby-crowned queen of all wild fruits. Here—and who can blame him?—will our exquisite, with wife and children, if he be the fortunate proprietor of so many fingers, spend the long June day; eating as many berries as possible, and amassing in leafy baskets the rich remainder, to be sold to the happy holders of splendid shillings, or to dry in the burning sun for next winter's "tea-saase." Ploughing would be more profitable, certainly, but not half so pleasant, for ploughing is *work*.

Then come the whortleberries; not the little, stunted, seedy things that grow on dry uplands and sandy commons; but the produce of towering bushes in the plashy meadow; generous, pulpy berries, covered with a fine bloom; the "blae-berry" of Scotland; a delicious fruit, though of humble reputation, and, it must be confessed, somewhat enhanced in value by the scarcity of the more refined productions of the garden. We scorn thee not, oh! bloom-covered neighbour! but gladly buy whole bushels of thy prolific family from the lounging Indian, or the

still lazier white man. We must not condemn the gatherers of whortleberries, but it is a melancholy truth that they do not get rich.

Wild plums follow closely in the wake of whortleberries, and these are usually picked when they are so sour and bitter as to be totally uneatable; because the rush for them is so great, among the class alluded to, that each thinks nobody else will wait for them to ripen; and whoever succeeds in stripping all the trees in his neighbourhood, even though he can neither use nor sell a particle of his treasure, deems himself the fortunate man. This seems ridiculous, truly; but is it not exactly the spirit of the miser? What matters whether the thing be gold or green plums, if they are equally useless? This blind haste to secure any thing bearing the form of fruit, is only an extreme exemplification of the desire to snatch a precarious subsistence from the lap of Nature, instead of paying the price which she ever demands for a due and full enjoyment of her bounties.

Baiting for wild bees beguiles the busy shunner of work into many a wearisome tramp, many a night-watch, and many a lost day. This is a most fascinating chase, and sometimes excites the very spirit of gambling. The stake seems so small in comparison with the possible prize—and gamblers and honey-seekers think all possible things probable—that some, who are scarcely ever tempted from regular business by any other disguise of idleness, cannot withstand a bee-hunt. A man whose arms and axe are all-sufficient to insure a comfortable livelihood for himself and his family, is chopping, perhaps, in a thick wood, where the voices of the locust, the cricket, the grasshopper, and the wild bee, with their kindred, are the only sounds that reach his ear from sunrise till sunset. He feels lonely and listless; and as noon draws on, he ceases from his hot toil, and, seating himself on the tree which has just fallen beneath his axe, he takes out his lunch of bread and butter, and, musing as he eats, thinks how hard his life is, and how much better it must be to have bread and butter without working for it. His eye wanders through the thick forest, and follows, with a feeling of envy, the winged inhabitants of the trees and flowers, till at length he notes among the singing throng some half dozen of bees.

The lunch is soon despatched; a honey tree must be near; and the chopper spends the remainder of the daylight in endeavouring to discover it. But the cunning insects scent the human robber, and will not approach their home until nightfall. So our weary wight plods homeward laying plans for their destruction.

The next morning's sun, as he peeps above the horizon, finds the bee-hunter burning honey-comb and old honey near the scene of yesterday's inkling. Stealthily does he watch his line of bait, and cautiously does he wait until the first glutton that finds himself sated with the luscious feast sets off in a "bee-line"—"like arrow darting from the bow"—blind betrayer of his home, like the human inebriate. This is enough. The spoiler asks no more; and the first moonlight night sees the rich hoard transferred to his cottage; where it sometimes serves, almost unaided, as food for the whole family, until the last drop is consumed. One hundred and fifty pounds of honey are sometimes found in a single tree, and it must be owned the temptation is great; but the luxury is generally dearly purchased, if the whole cost and consequences be counted. To be content with what supplies the wants of the body for the present moment, is, after all, the characteristic rather of the brute than of the man; and a family accustomed to this view of life will grow more and more idle and thriftless, until poverty and filth and even beggary lose all their terrors. It is almost proverbial among farmers that bee-hunters are always behindhand.

Wild grapes must be left until after the hard frosts have mellowed their pulp; and the gathering of them is not a work of much cost of time or labour, since the whole vine is taken down at once, and rifled in a few moments; its bounteous clusters being reserved for the ignoble death of a protracted withering, as they hang on strings from the smoky rafters of the log-house.

Hazel-nuts are not very abundant, and they must therefore—so think our wiseacres—be pulled before they are fit for any thing, lest somebody else should have the benefit of them. So we seldom see a full ripe hazel-nut. I have had desperate thoughts of transplanting a hazel-bush or two; but I am assured it would only be buying Punchinello. Its powers are gone when it leaves its proper place.

Hickory-nuts afford a most encouraging resource. They are so plentiful in some seasons that one might almost live on them; and then the gathering of them is such famous pastime! An occasional risk of life and limb to be sure, but no *work!*

Hunting the deer, in forests which seem to have been planted to shelter him, and in which he is seldom far to seek, is a sort of middle term—a something *between* play and work—which is not very severely censured even by our utilitarians. Venison is not "meat," to be sure, in our parlance; for we reserve that term for pork, *par excellence;* but venison has some solid value, and may be salted and smoked, which seems to place it among the articles of household thrift. But our better farmers, though they may see deer-tracks in every direction round the scene of their daily rail-splitting, seldom hunt, unless in some degree debilitated by sickness, or from some other cause incapacitated for their usual daily course of downright, regular industry. "It is cheaper to buy venison of the Indians," say they; and now that the Indians are all gone, there are white Indians enough—white skins with Indian tastes and habits under them—to make hunting a business of questionable respectability. Ere long it will be left in the hands of such, with an occasional exception in favour of city gentlemen who wander into the wilds with the hope of rebracing enervated frames by some form of exercise which is not *work.*

CHANCES AND CHANGES;

OR, A CLERICAL WOOING.

THIS disquisition upon some of the different phases of that sweet sin—idleness, has no particular reference to the little story that follows, except so far as it was suggested by the subduing influences of the delicious season at which the incidents here related are supposed to have occurred. It must be a dry and impracticable mind, indeed, that is not filled to overflowing with the beauty of our Indian summer; when every winding valley, every softly swelling upland, in the picturesque "openings," is clothed in such colours as no mortal pencil can imitate, blended together with such magical effect, that it is as if the most magnificent of all sunsets had fallen suddenly from heaven to earth, and lay, unchanged, on forest, hill, and river. Not a tree, from the almost black green of tamarack and hemlock, to the pale willow and the flaunting scarlet maple, the crimson-brown oak and the golden beech—not a shrub, however insignificant its name or homely its form—but contributes to the general splendour. Frequent showers, soft and silent as the very mist, cover the leaves with dewy moisture; and upon this glittering veil shines out the tempered autumn sun, calling forth at once glowing hues and nutty odours, which had been lost in a drier and less changeful atmosphere. Low in the bosom of almost every valley lies either a little lake ready to mirror back the wondrous pageant, or a bright winding stream, seldom musical here where scarce a stone of any size is to be found, but always crystal clear, and watched over by bending willows, or parting to give place to tiny islands loaded with evergreens. The sharp crack of the rifle or fowling-piece seems like sacrilege in such scenes; yet the multi-

tude of wild, shy, glancing creatures, that venture forth to enjoy the balmy air and regale themselves upon the abundance of nature at this season, tempts into the woods so many of those to whom the idea of game is irresistible, that we must take the sportsman with his fine dogs, his glittering gun and his gay hunting gear, as part of the picture, if we would have it true to the life; and we cannot deny that he makes a picturesque adjunct, though we hate the "barbarous art" that brings him to these sweet solitudes.

But not alone on the wild wood and the silent lake does the Indian summer shed its tender light, making beautiful what might else have seemed rough and common-place. The harvest has been nearly all gathered, and the ploughing for next year's crop has made some progress, as the deep rich brown of some fields and the plough itself slowly moving in others can tell us. See those unerring furrows, those ridges, sometimes curving a little round some lingering stump, but always parallel, be the area ever so extensive. Or look yonder, beyond the line of crimson and brown shrubs that line the rough fence, at the sower, pacing the wide field with the measured tread of the soldier, that each spot may get its due proportion of the golden treasure; and keeping exact time with foot and hand, his own thoughts furnishing his only music. No hireling or giddy youth is entrusted with this nice operation. The foundation for next year's riches is laid by the master himself; but you may perhaps see the harrow which follows his footsteps attended only by one of the younglings of the house, whose little hands wield the slender willow wand which urges on old Dobbin; and whose shrill piping tones are a far off imitation of the gruffer shouting of the elder. The adjoining field is like a fairy camp, with its ranges of tent-like stacks of corn, and a young maple left standing here and there as if on purpose to supply the flaring red banners necessary to the illusion. "Fallows gray" are not wanting, to temper the general gorgeousness, nor parties of "huskers" to give a human interest to the picture. Here and there a cluster of hay-stacks of all sizes, covered with roofs shaped like those of a Chinese pagoda, give quite an oriental touch; while, close at hand, a long shambling Yankee teamster, coaxing and scolding his oxen in the most un-

couth of all possible voices, will recall the whereabout, with a shock, as it were; reminding one that the prevailing human tone of the region is any thing but poetical.

One very striking feature in our autumn scenery is one that was undreamed of in the days when people ventured to be poetical upon rural themes. Cowper sings with homely truth—

> Thump after thump resounds the constant *flail*,
> That seems to swing uncertain, and yet falls
> Full on the destin'd ear. Wide flies the chaff,
> The rustling straw sends up a frequent mist
> Of atoms sparkling in the noon-day beam ——

But he would listen in vain for the flail at the West, at least during the autumn. The threshing-machine has superseded all slower modes of extracting the grain from the ear; and though a "machine" has a paltry sound, the operation of this mighty instrument gives rise to scenes of the greatest animation and interest. Half a dozen horses and all the stout arms of the neighbourhood are kept busy by its requisitions. One of the more active youths climbs the tall stack to toss down the sheaves; the next hand cuts the "binder," and passes the sheaf to the "feeder," who throws it into the monster's mouth. Round goes the cylinder, at the rate of several hundred revolutions in a minute, and the sheaf comes from among the iron teeth completely crushed; the grain, straw, and chaff in one mass, but entirely detached from each other—the work of a whole day of old-fashioned threshing being performed in a few minutes. Several persons are busied in raking away the straw from the machine as rapidly as possible; and shouts and laughter and darting movements testify to the excitement of the hour. A day with the machine is considered one of the most laborious of the whole season; yet it is a favourite time, for it requires a gathering, which is always the signal for hilarity in the country.

So tremendous a power does not work without danger; and, accordingly, the excitement of the occupation is heightened by the fear of broken arms, dislocated shoulders, torn hands, and the like—even death itself being no unusual attendant on the threshing-machine. But no one ever hesitates to use it on this account·

since rail-road speed is as much the foible of the backwoodsman as of his civilized brother. No inconsiderable portion of the grain is wasted by this tearing process; and the straw, considered so important by the thorough farmer, is rendered nearly useless; but the lack of barns in which to store the grain for the slower process of threshing, and the desire to have a great job finished at once, reconciles the farmer to all this. The birds profit by it at least.

The "making a business" of marriage, which forms the nucleus of the following story, is by no means peculiar to the new country, though it is certainly better suited to a half savage tone of manners, than to society which pretends to civilization. Strange to say, marriages contracted without any previous acquaintance between the parties, are almost confined to a class which, of all others, is bound to teach the sacredness of the tie. For such to treat marriage as a mere business contract, without the least reference to the undivided and exclusive affection which alone can make it holy and ennobling, is indeed a marvel; and I trust that so coarse a form of utilitarianism may become less and less popular among us. If I appear to have done any thing in the following little sketch calculated to make the practice seem less revolting, let it be ascribed to the state of society in which the circumstances are supposed to have occurred. Among isolated and uneducated people, we may tolerate what should be held unpardonable where greater advantages and greater pretensions entitle us to look for a higher degree of refinement.

CHAPTER I.

Let India boast her groves, nor envy we
The weeping amber and the balmy tree.

THESE western colonies, gatherings as they are from the four corners of the earth, of people whose manners, habits, and ideas are various as their origin, present a thousand little oddities of custom and character, sometimes amusing and sometimes vexatious enough to the looker-on, whose own peculiarities afford in turn their share of marvel and diversion. The Yankee smiles when the Scotsman asks for "a few o' they molasses" for his cake; the Scot stares in his turn when the man of Connecticut calls that cake a "griddle" or a "slap-jack." The Englishman describes gravely a machine which is to be "perpelled by the hair;" and the Maineman who indulges a joke at his expense will talk the next moment of his "ca-ow," which, with an indescribable twang, he will declare to be "the beatermost critter under the canopy." And in actions as well as words—in modes as well as manners—is this variety constantly presenting itself. We may see glimpses of half our United States within the compass of a school-district. We may travel without stirring from the cottage fireside, and, in one sense, (not the poet's,)

"Run the great cycle, and be still at home."

An odd affair which occurred last autumn within our bounds gave rise to these reflections, though perhaps the critical reader may decide that the association is not a very obvious one. A slender thread serves sometimes to string female reveries, and it is doubtless best they should not aim too much at "consecution of discourse," lest they be accused of lecturing. I shall tell my little story "promiscuous like," claiming my feminine privilege.

The occasion was a nutting-party—a regularly planned and numerously attended expedition in search of hickory-nuts; a cold-

blooded conspiracy against the domestic comfort of the squirrels, whose despairing sighs probably swelled the soft southern breeze which we enjoyed so thoughtlessly. But this nutting is a wondrous pleasant kind of laborious idleness. Leaving out of view the desirableness of the spoil—forgetting the talk-promoting influence of a dish of well-cracked nuts placed on the little table before the fire at Christmas-tide, or in some bitter evening in February, when the snapping and cracking of the more distant articles of furniture tell of the struggle between the frosty influences without and the glowing warmth within,—the gathering is a toil to be coveted for its own sake. It is a mode of getting at the very essence and heart of a delicious autumn day, when the misty air glows with an indistinct diffusion of sunlight, so softened and so universal that we can scarce point out the spot whence it emanates, and all the tints of earth are blended and neutralized into a perfect harmony with this enchanting atmosphere. Green is almost or quite gone; scarlet has sobered into crimson, and that again into a golden brown. The leaves still hang in isolated clusters upon the oaks, dry, and rustling ever and anon with a melancholy, sighing music; but the hickory trees stretch their long branches and lift their lofty heads, denuded of every thing but their fragrant fruit, which, looked at from below, dwindles to the size of dots on the rich sky.

This is the time, of all others, for long rambles; and when October brings it round, we moralizers upon the thriftless and vagrant habits of certain of our neighbours, are disposed to be at least as idle as the idlest, and think no day better, or at least more delightfully spent, than that on which we repair to a strip of untouched forest land a mile or two from our village, and there waste the short afternoon in such sport as fascinates the truant schoolboy, until the declining sun, and the chilly breeze of approaching night, warn us off, tired trespassers upon nature's blest domain. Is it possible any body ever had the heart to whip a truant boy in such weather, when the forest was accessible?

Oh! the pleasures of the cart ride, even with its unfailing accompaniment of shrieks of pretty terror, as the patient oxen draw us up and down and sidling through hills on whose impracticable roughness no horses could be trusted! Then comes the racing

search after the oldest trees, which are always supposed to promise the largest nuts, and then the scramble when some strong arm shakes down a rattling shower on the unequal floor formed around the foot of the tree by means of shawls and cloaks and buffalo-robes, spread on the ground lest the thick bed of leaves should hide the falling treasure. Many is the wild shout of youthful glee when some older or less accustomed face is unwarily turned upward for a moment to ask another shower, and receives, perchance, a billeted bullet on the tip of its nose. And not a little consoling is required by the infant heroes upon whom the bounties of autumn descend too copiously, administering more and harder thumps than their green philosophy has yet been trained to endure.

These frolics are not without their perils, however, and those more serious than a bruised nose or a thumped shoulder; and the especial nut-gathering of which I began to tell, will, I am sure, be long remembered by all concerned, though perhaps for very various reasons.

II.

Ye list to the songs of the same forest bird,
Your own merry music together is heard:
Nor can Echo, sweet sisters! amid the rocks tell
Your voices apart in her moss-covered cell.

Our party was a large one, and as merry as it was large. Three great wagons, drawn by oxen, were our vehicles; and into these were crammed as many giggling girls as possible, with a few older heads by way of ballast. Three stout farmers went along, to shout at the teams, and to pilot us safely over hill and hollow—no sinecure, as I before hinted. These were to officiate also as shakers or *pounders;* for, be it known, whenever the attendants on these occasions are too old or too lazy to climb, they make their services effectual by upheaving great stones, which they throw against the tree with main force, producing concussions which might bring down toppling cliffs, let alone hickory-nuts. Our friends, Haw and Gee, were of the order of the ele-

phant, and could not be induced to climb; but they were admirable pounders, and we were soon well pelted with nuts, and busily engaged in freeing them from their aromatic wrappers—an operation which we of the West call "shucking."

Among our bright-eyed company were the twin-daughters of a worthy neighbour of ours, generally known among the villagers by the title of Deacon Lightbody, though I believe he has not any other clain to the dignity than that which rests upon a particularly grave face, and a devoted attention to the secular affairs of his church. He always makes the fire in the meeting-house—sees to the sweeping and lighting—asks the minister to dinner—hands up all notices—turns out the dogs that sometimes intrude during service—and does all necessary frowning and head-shaking at the unlucky urchins who laugh when the said dogs howl just outside the door. All this Mr. Lightbody does, not for the lucre of gain, but from pure love of what he calls the "good cause," though I doubt he deceives himself a little as to the catholicity of his regard for religion. Yet he declares he *does* try to have charity for those who do not think as he does in matters of faith, though it is certain that no Christian can objeot to any of his favourite doctrines, since they are Bible truths and nothing else. We must leave the worthy deacon to reconcile these incongruities, as they have no immediate bearing on our little story, and were introduced solely for the purpose of making our reader acquainted with Mr. Lightbody's turn of mind.

Those twin-daughters of his were "as like as two peas"—sweet peas—or pea blossoms rather. Such cloudless azure eyes—such diaphanous complexions—such dimpling roses and such sunny hair! If one should undertake to describe them, nothing but superlatives would do. Yet their hands had handled the churn-dasher too often to be very satiny in the palm, and their feet, having never been coaxed into shoes of the size and shape of a scissors-sheath, were unfashionably well-proportioned. Charming fairies were they, nevertheless, and wonderfully alike, yet with a difference, perceptible enough to their intimates. Ruth was the demure fairy—Elsie the tricksy sprite. Ruth was born a careful, tidy housewife; Elsie an incorrigible shatter-brain. Ruth never did wrong, while Elsie had to atone for all sorts of offences

against good order and good government twenty times a day. Yet she made up so sweetly, and was withal so kind and loving, that her father, who meant to be considered a stern stickler for family discipline, could seldom find it in his heart to scold her for her faults, except when she laughed in meeting, which always cost her a laborious pacification.

These two lilies of the valley were arrayed in white, as was meet: Ruth's ribands being lilac, and Elsie's pale green, for the convenience of being known apart. As an offset to their wood-nymph costume, we had Miss Cotgrave in a purple silk, with her coal-black locks brought down to her chin, and then wound round her large ears, and a pinch-back brooch by way of *ferronière*. Then there was Ellen Shirley, prepared for a game at her dearly beloved romps, wisely preferring a pink gingham dress to any sort of finery; and Patty Chandler grasping her great basket and staring silently with round eyes, seemingly full of nothing but anxiety lest she should not manage to secure her share of the spoils. These, with half a dozen or more of little folks, who were any thing but *personnages muets*, made up our "load," and the other vehicles carried crews neither less numerous nor less noisy.

The young ladies talked and laughed moderately, for there were no beaux; and Miss Cotgrave said she rejoiced that it was so, for she did hate to have a parcel of young men hanging about.

III.

> These arms
> Invite the chain, this naked breast the steel.

It could not have been long after we left the village that two sober-looking individuals, drest in comely and reverend black, greeted the pleased eyes of Deacon Lightbody as he stood at his own door, looking at the meeting-house, (as was his habit,) and noting the curious effect of the level beams of the afternoon sun, which shone through and through the little building, making it glow like a lantern. Light brought warmth to mind, and the

deacon, by a natural transition, began thinking that the very next week he must bestir himself and get up a "bee" to bank up his beloved meeting-house.

Are there any of my readers so benighted as not to take the sense of this home-bred phrase? Then I must stop to tell them that a "bee" is a collection of volunteers who agree to meet at some specified time to accomplish any object of public or private utility which requires the concurrence of numbers. And "banking up" is a service rendered very necessary by the severity of our winters and the slightness of our dwellings, and consists in piling earth round the foundations, so as to prevent the frosty winds from intruding below the floor. All this has nothing at all to do with our important history, but is merely a private hint for the enlightenment of the unlearned.

The deacon, then, was devising liberal things for the good of his dear meeting-house, when the two suits of black, with faces to correspond, (not to match,) crossed his line of vision and brought a pleased expression into his solemn countenance. The gentlemen alighted, and proved to be—one a church-officer from a neighbouring town, and the other a young clergyman, who being just come there, and likely to officiate within our bounds occasionally, was an object of the first interest to Mr. Lightbody.

After a short prelude, Mr. Poppleton, the elder gentleman, began. "I called, Mr. Lightbody, to introduce this reverend gentleman to your acquaintance."

Mr. Lightbody shook hands, and then shook hands again, and asked the gentlemen to walk in.

Mr. Poppleton, with a somewhat impatient wave of the hand, as much as to say he had come on business, and had no time for ceremony, proceeded in his speech.

"This gentleman, sir, is Mr. Hammond,—the reverend Mr. Hammond, sir—who is going to be with us for a spell, and perhaps longer—and as he thinks some of settling at the West, he judges it best, and so do we all—that he should take a wife, and so keep house, for you know it isn't pleasant for a minister to be boarding round. And he has been recommended—"

The young man upon this turned, Deacon Lightbody says, "as red as a fire-coal," (as well he might,) and stammered out some-

thing about his having heard that Mr. Lightbody had two daughters. "Why, yes, sir—yes,—I have so"—said the deacon—a snug parsonage appearing at the end of a short vista in his imagination—"I have so—and the neighbours *do* say that they are pretty likely girls—but walk in—walk in;" and the guests were ushered in with reverential alacrity.

In the "keepin-room" they found Mrs. Lightbody, with her hearth scrupulously swept, and her white apron shining with cleanliness, and her fair hair most primly arranged under a transparent cap, which was yet not so clear as her complexion. The ceremony of introduction having been repeated, Mr. Poppleton, with very little circumlocution, gave Mrs. Lightbody to understand the especial purport of the visit.

The good lady shared her husband's reverence for all that belonged to the church, but she was a woman and a mother, and she coloured deeply,—almost painfully, at this abrupt reference to the disposal of a daughter. But Mr. Poppleton had come on business, and he knew only one way of doing it; and Mr. Hammond said but little, having, indeed, but little opportunity. After some ineffectual attempts, he kept his eyes fixed firmly on the floor while his mouth-piece set forth his claims and enlarged upon his plans and prospects.

In Mr. Lightbody's mind, however, all was sunshine. To have a minister for a son-in-law, was all that his ambition coveted; and to do the candidate justice, his countenance and manner,—setting aside the unmanageable awkwardness of his present position—were much in his favour.

"As far as I'm concerned," said Mr. Lightbody in winding up the conference, "as far as I'm concerned, I'm perfectly agreeable: I give my consent, and I dare say Miss Lightbody won't say no—you can take your choice—airy one of 'em—airy one of 'em—that is—if they are agreeable, you know! I shouldn't put any force upon 'em, nor over-persuade 'em—but if they're agreeable I am!"

Thus encouraged, the principal and his *double* took leave, in spite of pressing invitations to stay tea. They were on their way to some convocation of their order, and were to call as they returned. But meanwhile, as their way onward lay near the

nutting-ground, Mr. Hammond suggested that it might not be amiss to make some small tarry in that vicinity. Perhaps he thought his choice need not be restricted to the deacon's fair twins —or perhaps—but they came—saw—

IV.

Alive, I would be loved of one—
I would be wept when I am gone.

In the midst—the very acme—of our frolic, when Ruth was swinging in a grape-vine which had been slung so conveniently by the freakish hand of Nature that it needed very little aid from man,—and Elsie, shrieking like a Banshee, was flying through the dry leaves, pursued by Patty Chandler, whose basket she had mischievously abstracted—this was the time, of all others, when the two sober-looking horsemen rode up the hillside and presented themselves to the view of our abashed damsels, who had forgotten that there were any grave people in the world. A wet blanket! and all our fire was extinguished accordingly. Every body fell to picking up nuts with an air of conscious delinquency.

Mr. Poppleton was acquainted with most of the party, and gave his companion a general introduction; singling out Ruth and Elsie, however, and endeavouring, by sundry not very far-sought questions, to make them shine out for Mr. Hammond's encouragement, just as we pat and coax a shy horse when we wish to show his paces to advantage. But the twins were more than shy, and could not be brought to say any thing but yes and no, so that Mr. Poppleton, discouraged by the result of this his first effort at a more diplomatic mode of proceeding, fairly called them aside, leaving Mr. Hammond staring and unprotected among a parcel of giddy girls.

The reverend youth had no long trial, however, for it was but a moment before Mr. Poppleton returned, and with a grave sigh beckoned him away.

It took us a good while to find the fair sisters, and when they did show themselves, Ruth looked primmer than ever, and Elsie

had certainly been shedding tears, though her face gave us no small reason to suspect they had been tears of laughter.

"What *did* Mr. Poppleton want?" was the question of half a dozen pairs of lips.

"Who is that handsome young man? Is he a minister?" asked not a few.

The answers to these questions were very vague. Ruth, and even Elsie seemed seized with a fit of the silents, and conjecture was left to float wide and pick up all sorts of things.

"I'll tell you!" said Miss Cotgrave, whose thoughts were a good deal turned towards matrimony, "I'll tell you all about it! I see it all now! Old Pop is looking for a wife for that young man. He always takes care of the young ministers, and he's been to Deacon Lightbody's to speak for one of his girls!"

The truth thus blurted out was almost too much for the heroines of Mr. Poppleton's anti-romance. They blushed, they laughed, they made up all sorts of improbable stories, and to escape from the storm of raillery, began seeking for nuts with renewed industry.

"How provoking that we have no one to climb the trees!" said Elsie; "the nuts hang on the upper boughs after all the shaking!" and at the word, the best climber in the country was at her elbow.

Joe Fenton, a son of the forest, dark-eyed and ruddy-cheeked, and withal slender and elastic as a willow wand, had long been suspected of a bashful liking for Elsie, and yet no one,—not even Miss Cotgrave,—had ever been able to ascertain whether there had actually been any "love-passages" between them or not. The principal ground for any suspicion of partiality on the side of the young lady was an over-scrupulous avoidance of Master Fenton upon every occasion. This, Miss Cotgrave says, is "a sure sign."

Joe had been ploughing in a neighbouring field, (Burns has made ploughing glorious, O gentle reader!) and hearing the merry shouts of the nut-gatherers, could not resist the temptation to come and see if his help was not needed.

"Oh! climb the tree, Joe!" said the little folks, for the grown damsels were somewhat ceremonious, although Joe was in his

every-day clothes, and did not look half the beau he appears on Sundays and high occasions.

Not another word was needed, and it was scarcely a moment before Joe was poised on a bough which it made one dizzy to look up at. Down came the pelting showers on all sides, and we were fain to run away until the rain had ceased from the exhausted condition of the reservoirs. Baskets were filled, and bags were brought from the wagons. Another and another tree did young Fenton climb, and with equal success, until Miss Cotgrave, in pursuing her running changes upon her favourite theme, inflicted a cruel pinch upon Ruth's arm, asking her whether the young parson was in treaty for herself or her sister.

A scream from Ruth at the moment when Fenton was making a perilous transit from one branch to another, caused him to miss his hold, and the next instant he lay on the ground at her feet—dead, as we all supposed. His lips were colourless, and his breathing had ceased entirely.

It were vain to tell of the consternation, the distress which followed. Ruth's grief was terrific. The poor girl, feeling that she had been the cause, though innocently, of this sad accident, hung over him, wringing her hands in helpless anguish, beseeching him to open his eyes and speak to her, and this in tones which could hardly fail to awaken life if a glimmering remained.

We had begun to despair of the success of the simple remedies which were within our reach when a deep-drawn sigh from the sufferer relieved us. As one of the company observed, "The minute he ketch'd his breath, his cheeks begun to look streaked," and the red streaks soon overpowered the white ones. Our efforts were now renewed, and Ruth—the prim, the demure Ruth,—transported beyond herself by the first violent emotion she had ever experienced, was as profuse in her exclamations of hope and joy, as she had before been in those of agonizing self-reproach. It was at this moment that Elsie made her appearance for the first time since the accident. She was pale, but most of us were so, and no one seemed so little inclined to assist in recovering poor Joe's scattered senses.

"La!" said Miss Cotgrave, "if nobody had cared any more

about Joe Fenton than you did, Elsie, he might have been dead by this time!"

Joe turned his opening eyes full upon Elsie.

"Are you much hurt?" she inquired, with an indifferent air. Ruth replied for him, with a most eloquent exposition of the danger, and the terror, and the joy; but Elsie turned away as if she had not heard the words.

We got our patient into a wagon by the aid of our stout teamsters; we had him bled when we reached home, and he felt almost well before bed-time,—well bodily, we mean, for Elsie's coldness had found a very sensitive spot in his heart, and the poor boy could hardly think of it without shivering.

V.

What wicked and dissembling glass of mine
Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne?

In two days Joe Fenton's lithe limbs were as active as ever, but the bleeding had done nothing for the blow on his heart. He had never, we are assured, told his love to Elsie, but he thought she knew all about it, and now to be treated in this killing sort of way! It was plain that he must have deceived himself entirely; and, lacking courage to encounter Elsie's frigid looks again, he resolved to make Ruth the confidant of his troubles, and to engage her good offices with her less approachable sister.

As to his shy Doris, she had been gloomy and reserved with her sister, but more than once closeted with Miss Cotgrave, who had made her several long calls. Calls are sometimes very useful in enlightening us as to the character and intentions of particular friends who do not happen to be present, and Miss Cotgrave was conscientiously anxious to disabuse Elsie's mind on the subject of Fenton's attachment. For this benevolent purpose, the occurrence in the wood afforded excellent material. Elsie, who had witnessed the accident from a distance, was at first unable to move toward the spot, and afterward deterred by some pangs of maidenly jealousy awakened by the passionate grief of her sister.

We do not like that others should display too much interest in those who ought to love us and us only; and the instinctive feeling of resentment is apt to extend itself even to the objects of such impertinent affection. So poor Elsie, whose brain was none of the clearest after that unhappy tumble, came at once to the conclusion that she must either have been deceived throughout, or that her young admirer had proved inconstant; and her uneasiness took the form of high displeasure at both parties concerned, with some share of the same feeling towards all the rest of the world, including her own silly self.

Fenton knocked at Mr. Lightbody's door, and Elsie ran and hid herself in the garden. Here she shed tears enough to have watered a heavier sorrow, and in the very tempest of her passion she saw her false love and her cruel sister going out as for a walk, engaged in earnest conversation. The thing was certain, and the blue eyes were proudly dried—to be swimming again the very next moment.

"Elsie! Elsie!" It was her father's voice; and summoning new resolution, she wiped away the intrusive tears and hastened to the house. In the keepin-room she encountered Mr. Poppleton and his youthful reverend. Mr. and Mrs. Lightbody sat by, but Mr. Poppleton was again the spokesman.

"Which of you is it?" asked the good man after brief salutation to the April-faced maiden; then checking himself, he added, "But that isn't it—are you the one that had the green string around her neck t'other day? That was the one we wanted."

Elsie answered mechanically, "Yes."

"Why you don't look so chirk as you did then. You ain't sick, be ye?"

This brought a mechanical "No."

"Oh! only a little peakin, eh! Well! now you see, we've come on particular business. Mr. Hammond stands in need of a helpmate; and after consulting with his friends, and also getting the consent and good-will of your honoured father, he wishes to know if you could be agreeable to undertake the journey of life with him,—that is, if you think you could pitch upon him for a husband?"

"Mr. Poppleton," began the blushing Mr. Hammond, as soon

as he could edge in a word, "you embarrass the young lady, sir! Allow me a few minutes' conversation—"

"Mr. Hammond," rejoined the elder, with rather a severe air, "missionaries and missionaries' wives must not be fancy-led like the vain world. This young woman has been well brought up, and showed her duty in all things, and now the only question seems to *me* to be, whether she can make up her mind to renounce vanity and folly, and spend the rest of her life in doing good." And upon this text spoke Mr. Poppleton for something like half an hour, aided very warmly now and then by Mr. Lightbody, but uninterrupted by any body else. His discourse had so much the air of a sermon that it would have seemed impertinent,—so Mr. Hammond thought, we dare say,—to have attempted to refute or modify any of its positions. Even a sermon must have an end, however, and when the orator had gone over and over, and round and round the subject till he felt satisfied with his exposition of it, he turned to Mrs. Lightbody with a very complacent, "Well, ma'am, what do *you* say?"

Mrs. Lightbody remembered, though she did not tell, that she had for some time past observed certain almost intangible indications of a liking for somebody else, and she therefore referred the matter to Elsie herself, only observing that a good minister's wife was a great blessing to the people.

What was her surprise when Elsie, who had been gazing out of the window, turned suddenly to her father, and gave an unconditional, and almost impetuous consent.

"Why, Elsie!" said Mrs. Lightbody.

"She's right!" said the deacon, rubbing his hands.

"I hope she'll be a burning"—began Mr. Poppleton. But Mr. Hammond, looking at the agitated countenance of the beautiful girl, motioned to his ally to cease, and taking her hand desired her to compose herself, saying, stiffly enough, but yet kindly, that he would give her no further trouble at present, but would call again in a day or two.

And with the usual adieux these odd negotiators departed.

VI.

Kissing the lips of unacquainted change.

THAT very evening, when the two fair sisters retired to their chamber, did Ruth, drawing encouragement from Elsie's tear-stained cheeks, open her mission—how different from the other!

It was a tale of such passionate protestation—such humble suing,—on the part of the hero of the hickory-nutting—that Elsie, stung with compunction for her blind precipitancy, called and thought herself the most wretched of human beings; and almost frightened her more placid sister by the vehemence of her sorrow. Fenton loved her then, after all; and she—what had she done! "Why, Elsie, dear!" said the soft-voiced Ruth, as the stricken-hearted girl sobbed upon her bosom, "what *can* be the matter? I used to think you liked Joe Fenton—"

"Oh! Ruth! I have promised—promised that odious old Poppleton—that hateful young minister,"—and here tears stopped the sad story.

"Promised what, dear?" said Ruth, who was a matter-of-fact little body.

"Oh! promised to be a missionary—to go and live in the woods—to marry that—oh dear! oh dear!"

"To marry that young clergyman! Why, Elsie! how can you call him hateful! He is as much handsomer than Joe Fenton as—"

"Handsome! I don't care for his being handsome! I hate him! I wish I had never seen him! Oh! that miserable nutting!" And her tears poured afresh.

Ruth sat in musing silence. She could not find it in her heart to condole with her sister upon the prospect of becoming the help-meet of so attractive a missionary; and she was unconsciously balancing in her own mind the various points of difference between Mr. Hammond and Joe Fenton, when Elsie suddenly started up.

"Ruth! why won't you take him yourself?"

"I!" said Ruth, bridling up a little, "why, because he has not asked me!"

"Oh! but—dear, dear sister—you know we are so much alike that strangers never can tell us apart. Now do! there's a darling good girl! do save me from all this misery! I can never love him—I shall hate him—and that will be so wicked for a missionary's wife!"

Ruth shook her head very discouragingly. She could not think of offering herself, even to a minister.

"Ah! but you know, Mr. Poppleton only asked for the one that wore the green riband, and if you would just change with me, nobody would know the difference except father and mother; and they would not tell. Oh! Ruth, if you love me one bit you can't refuse! You are just the very thing for a minister's wife! so much better than poor me! Dear, dear Ruth—won't you? You have never loved any body else; and I'm sure this young minister is good as well as handsome. You don't know how kindly he spoke to me,"—and Elsie stopt for want of breath.

"You said just now that he was hateful," said Ruth, with her most demure air.

"Ah! but I was thinking of poor Joe, then—I mean I was thinking how he loved me—you told me yourself, you know—oh! I should be so miserable—but I never will marry him, and then father will be so angry!" And with a profusion of tears and kisses she besought her sister to say yes, but in vain. All that Ruth could be brought to promise was, that she would talk to her father and mother about it, though she could scarcely withstand the sobs which continued to burst from Elsie's heart long after she had fallen asleep.

Upon consulting with the higher powers, Mrs. Lightbody was soon persuaded into thinking with Elsie, that if Ruth would take her place, the young minister would never observe the difference; but Mr. Lightbody had the dignity of the cloth too much at heart to allow of this attempt at deception. He persisted in his opinion that since Elsie had made an engagement, she ought certainly to fulfil it.

"And let Fenton take Ruth, if he's a mind to," concluded the old gentleman with his peculiarly solemn air. "Joe's a good

young man, and he's got a good farm too—that is—he will have when it's cleared up—and Ruth will likely have a sight more of worldly goods than Elsie, though she won't have a minister, to be sure—I hold that a young woman that's got a minister hasn't got much to wish for."

"But, father," said Elsie, who was almost writhing under this business-like estimate of the matter,—"what will poor Joe say?"

"Say! why that's pretty good! Didn't you tell me just now that the reverend Mr. Hammond would just as leave marry one as the other? Is Joe Fenton to set up to be more difficult than a minister, I should like to know?"

Yet Elsie did not desist in despair. She was accustomed to victory upon easier terms, it is true, but she spared neither tears nor coaxing until she brought her father to a compromise.

It was agreed that when Mr. Hammond paid the critical visit both sisters should wear green ribands, and let the young divine make a choice, which was to be considered final.

VII.

> Say that but once I see a beauteous star,
> I may forget it for another star.

THE toilet of youth and beauty ought never to cost much time, and the ordinary costume of the fair twins was simpler than the simplest; yet the reverend Mr. Hammond had been in the parlour for a long nervous half hour, and Mr. Lightbody had given several Blue-Beard-like calls at the foot of the stairs, before Ruth and Elsie made their appearance on the day of destiny. The interval had been spent in the most minute and anxious comparison of every several ringlet—every article of dress—and particularly every knot and wave of the talismanic green riband. When all was done they could scarce be sure each of her own blushing image in the mirror, so perfect was the resemblance.

"But oh! dear, dear Ruth!" said Elsie, "I am so afraid you will not be able to speak like me! Do try to be a little wild and

saucy! I fear that will betray us, after all. I can be as still as you, but you will not talk, I know!"

"I will do my best, since I have promised," said Ruth, with a sigh; "but oh! Elsie, if you were not such a dear, good sister—"

"Oh! come, come—don't let us wait a moment longer! There is father calling again!" And she hurried her sister along till they stood in the dreaded presence.

Mr. Hammond, who had fortunately or wisely left his Achates at home this time, arose to receive the fair sisters as they entered the room side by side. He cast his eyes wonderingly from one to the other, and finding himself totally at a loss, gravely resumed his seat with an air of painful embarrassment. It might embarrass a bolder man to find that he could not tell his betrothed "from any other true-love."

"Which of these young ladies have I seen before?" said he at last, with straightforward simplicity.

"You have seen us both!" exclaimed Elsie hastily.

The young man smiled, very quietly, and at once drew his chair near Elsie's, with so evident a recognition of the voice and manner that the poor child had much ado to restrain her tears. She looked imploringly at Ruth, but Ruth could do nothing but blush, and the catastrophe seemed inevitable, when Miss Cotgrave came sailing into the room.

She made her best and most sweeping courtesy to the young minister, and cast a very searching glance at our two agitated damsels. The young lady's eye was more than piercing—it was screwing—yet it was at fault now. Mr. Hammond was thrown out too, for in the process of receiving the new guest, Ruth and Elsie had changed their places, and Elsie, warned by past mischance, was resolutely silent.

"Dear! how dark you *do* keep your room, Mrs. Lightbody," said Miss Cotgrave, who, being intuitively aware of a matrimonial cloud in the horizon, was determined to have more light on the subject. "I declare, coming in out of the light I can scarcely see any body!"

"The western sun shone in so dazzling"—Mrs. Lightbody said. But Miss Cotgrave was not so to be baffled.

"Do *you* like the fashionable style of dark rooms, sir?" said she, appealing to Mr. Lightbody.

Fashion! at Deacon Lightbody's! The word "dance" did not galvanize douce Davie Deans more severely than did this unlucky term our worthy friend.

"No, indeed!" he exclaimed, with solemn earnestness; and in less than half a minute he had conscientiously withdrawn every curtain and thrown wide every blind, letting in the whole crimson flood of a gorgeous sunset, and adding an angelic radiance to the beautiful faces of his daughters.

"Why, Ruth! I didn't know you!" exclaimed Miss Cotgrave; "you and Elsie are more like each other than you are like yourselves!" Then in a lower tone to Elsie—"Poor Joe Fenton's shot, eh!"

A trained belle in a "fashionable" boudoir could not have fainted more gracefully than did our simple Elsie at these words. All was flutter, as is usual on such occasions, and nobody was half so frightened as poor Miss Cotgrave.

"Mercy on us! what is the matter? I wasn't in earnest—I only meant that he had got the bag to hold! Elsie, Elsie! don't! I was only joking because you had given him the mitten!"

During the time occupied in giving voice to these choice figures of speech, Elsie's scattered wits had been recalled by the abundant aid of cold water, and when she seemed quite recovered, Miss Cotgrave took her leave, a good deal mortified by the awkward result of her humorous effort, yet overjoyed to have come into possession of a secret, and above all, anxious to get somebody to help her keep it.

The young divine had stood gravely aloof during this scene. Inexperienced as he was in the matter of female whims, he was not yet so blind as to need telling that emotion, and not the illness which Elsie tried to pretend, had in reality caused her swoon. So, like a good and sensible Timothy as he was, he took the readiest and simplest way to relieve his gathering perplexities.

"Father!" said he, approaching Mr. Lightbody, who sat twirling his thumbs in a paroxysm of fidgets at Elsie's perverseness, "you have kindly consented to entrust me with one of your daughters, and I had hoped that the one I had the pleasure of

seeing here before, was disposed to listen to me with some degree of favour. If this is so, if the young lady does feel willing to undertake the toils and hardships of a missionary life—will you yourself bestow her upon me? for I confess that the wonderful resemblance between them leaves me entirely at a loss."

Mr. Lightbody gave a deep hem! sensibly relieved.

"Come here, Ruth, my dear!" said he, drawing the blushing damsel to him very gently, and with a manifest softening of the aspect which he usually considered becoming; "come here and tell your father if you think you could learn to be happy with this reverend gentleman," (his reverence was three-and-twenty,) "and whether you are willing to make the sacrifices that a minister's wife must make in this new country, and devote yourself to the service of religion and the advancement of sound doctrine?" He paused for a reply, but none came. Perhaps Ruth was thinking over these sacrifices, which form a standard topic on these occasions, though they are not, practically, very obvious, especially to people who have been accustomed to a country life.

Taking silence for assent, her father placed her passive hand in that of Mr. Hammond, and pronounced an emphatic blessing on them both. And, when this was done, her mother embraced her, and murmured in her ear some words of exhortation or encouragement, and then gave place to Elsie, who, after her own manner, kissed and cried, and whispered her thanks and blessings. And then the minister, whose views did not seem to accord in all respects with Mr. Poppleton's, (that gentleman would probably have judged it superfluous to remain after the business was settled,) drew his gentle *fiancée* to the garden-door, and thence into the garden, though it was already twilight, and there contrived to make her understand his plans and prospects much better than he could have done by proxy, even though that proxy had been Mr. Poppleton.

It was after they had vanished, that our hero of the nutting-party made his appearance upon the *tapis*, having been inspired by Miss Cotgrave with an irresistible desire to know what was really going on at Deacon Lightbody's. He could hardly have "happened in" at a more fortunate juncture. Elsie, to be sure, was "weeping-ripe," but the awful deacon was walking the floor

in a most complacent humour, and Mrs. Lightbody's mild eyes seemed to beam with unusual kindness.

Master Fenton was a man of few words, but those which he mustered for this occasion were very much to the purpose; and if Mr. Lightbody did not experience the same swelling of the heart as when he bestowed Ruth upon a minister, he gave his darling Elsie to the young farmer with very good will, and a blessing which came warm from the heart.

There was not a second garden for Fenton and Elsie, but they were old acquaintance; and, as the evening closed in, Mr. Lightbody rang the bell for family worship, and then, in the midst of happy hearts, reverently returned thanks for the manifold blessings of his earthly lot.

Mr. Hammond is fortunately settled in our neighbourhood, for the present at least; and he has the neatest little cottage in the wood, standing too under a very tall oak, which bends kindly over it, looking like the Princess Glumdalclitch inclining her ear to the box which contained her pet Gulliver. This cottage possesses among its recommendations that of being at the extremity of a charming walk through the forest, and this circumstance makes it especially precious to Elsie and Fenton, who are very attentive to the dominie's lady. Farmers cannot marry so speedily as ministers, but after next spring's business is finished, we shall, may be, have another wedding to record.

AMBUSCADES.

"Loves 's not a flower that grows on the dull earth;
Springs by the calendar—must wait for sun—
For rain—matures by parts—must take its time
To stem—to leaf—to bud—to blow; it owns
A richer soil and boasts a quicker seed."

J. SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

TOM OLIVER is the hero of my story, and there is almost enough of him to make two drawing-room heroes. Tom is long, and strong, and lithe enough to stand for a Kentucky Apollo; and in his fringed hunting-shirt, with rifle in hand, and a dashing 'coon-skin cap overshadowing his dark eyes, he is no bad personification of the Genius of the West. And this is paying the West a great compliment; for there is a wild grace and beauty about Tom's whole appearance that is not to be found everywhere.

I know not whether it would be safe to say that Tom has made his "hands hard with labour," for he is not particularly fond of work; but I may say he has made his "heart soft with pity," for a gentler nature lives not. Daring hunter as he is, he has found time to be the most dutiful of sons; and from his boyhood he was the sole support and comfort of a widowed mother. She depended upon him as if their relation had been reversed, and when the poor soul came to die, she could bear no hand near her but his. Night and day did he watch by her bedside, and the kind offices of the neighbouring matrons came no nearer than the preparation of such things as Tom required for his nursing. His hand administered the remedies, and offered the draught to the parched lip, and smoothed the pillows, and fanned the fainting brow. And when the last dread moment came, the same kind and dear hand was clasped in the chill embrace of the dying, and afterwards

closed with pious care the eyes that had so long looked upon him with more than a mother's love. Then and long afterwards, Tom mourned for his poor old mother as if she had been a youthful bride. He has a kind heart.

Tom's passion was hunting; and although this had been dutifully restrained while his mother required his services, when she was gone he found relief in indulging it to the uttermost. Whole weeks would he be absent, and at length return with only the skins of the deer and other animals that he had killed, and perhaps a small supply of food for an interval of rest. So expert was he in woodcraft that this course secured him all that his simple mode of life required. The cottage that had been his mother's home continued to be his; and the "forty" on which it stood was called his farm, though I believe the deer roamed as freely there as any where else in the forest. He has shot foxes and raccoons from his window. Yet he was accounted rich, for his log house was a good one and better furnished than most; and he had planted fruit and made various improvements for his mother's sake, which he would have been slow in making for his own; and, besides, he was known for so able and ingenious a "hand" that his services were much in request, and always commanded the highest price in the market. Such is our primitive estimate of the elements of worldly success, that Tom, take him all in all, was considered quite a speculation in the matrimonial way.

But a roving hunter is no mark for "the blind boy's butt-shaft." Our damsels might have saved themselves the trouble of curling their beau-killers, and slipping off their aprons as he approached. He never seemed to see them; but inquired, "Polly, where's your father?" or "Abby, does your mother want some venison?" without taking off his cap or putting down his rifle. The girls had well nigh given him up as a hopeless case before he announced his intention of travelling to see the world; and, when this was known, it was guessed by shrewd mothers that Tom meant to bring home a more "stylish" bride than any which our humble bounds afforded.

Tom went first to "York State"—that being the natural bent and limit of our travels—and after having been absent only about three weeks, he came back to his own house very compo-

sedly during a violent storm, and got ready to go hunting again. Neighbours felt a good deal of curiosity to learn what had sent him back so soon, but he only said the East was not what it was cracked up to be, and went on his old course. Ere long he was missing again, and no one could tell anything of his intentions, or of the probable length of his absence. His nearest neighbour took care of his cow and pigs, for every one liked to do Tom a good turn; and nobody broke his windows or pulled the shingles off his roof to make fishing-lights or quail-traps, because he might come back any day, and would not be likely to "impeticos" such gratuities very kindly. The whole long winter passed, and nothing was seen or heard of Tom Oliver.

During this time, an event of unwonted importance gave a stir to our village—nothing less than the addition of two new families, and those not of a stamp likely to slip unnoticed into so small a community. Widows guided them both, and each boasted a young lady; but if the mistresses might be cited in proof that the genus "vidder" has many varieties, so no less might we quote damsels as specimens of the distinct orders that are observable in young ladyhood.

Mrs. Levering was a thrifty dame, with one grown up son and ever so many little ones, and one only daughter, a lovely girl of seventeen or so, who wrought day and night with the patience of the gentle Griselidis, and seemed to feel that she was but labouring in her vocation. Her mother, a most devout believer in the lawful supremacy of the stronger sex, had brought up Emma to think that she was born to work for "the boys;" and so potent is habit, that the young girl, fair as she was, and worthy of a softer lot, had never learned to wish it otherwise. A plain house plainly furnished, and a moderate farm moderately stocked, formed the little all of the Leverings; and so completely were their time and attention absorbed by the cares of life, that Emma and her mother did not join the sewing society, nor the young man the hunting parties which alone constituted the winter's gayety. Yet everybody liked Emma, and many a wish was expressed that she would let her rosy cheeks be seen "somewhere else besides in the meetin'-house."

The other lady was a more marked person than any of the

Leverings. Mrs. Purfle, widow of the celebrated Doctor Purfle, who performed so many cures—time and place not specified—of diseases both before and since considered incurable—was somewhat past her prime, indeed had probably for some time been so. Yet she maintained much splendour of appearance; and having flourished as a milliner at the South, she had the advantage of possessing, in the remnants of her professional stores, more unmatched and unmatchable articles of finery than often find their way to this utilitarian West. She had also, as we may suppose, profited by the Doctor's professional researches; since she assured those of the young ladies whom she especially favoured, that washing spoils the complexion, and that her own somewhat shadowy hue was owing to her having discovered this cosmetic secret late in life. Add to all this that Mrs. Purfle is a woman of property, having a clear income of an hundred and fifty dollars per annum, (so says Rumour,) and a marriageable niece who is her decided heiress, and it will readily be imagined that the little green-blinded tenement which shelters Mrs. Purfle and her fair charge, was an object of no small interest in the eyes of the village.

Miss Celestina Pye, (called Teeny by her aunt, except on solemn occasions,) was scarcely taller than Mrs. Purfle's high-backed rocking-chair, but of a most bewitching *embonpoint.* Her complexion was of that kind which reminds one of a fat stewed oyster—white, soft, and unmeaning—probably a monument of the success of her aunt's hydrophobic plan. Her eyes were blue, what there was of them; her cheeks boasted each a spot of pink which looked like hectic; and her mouth was so pursed up that it seemed at first glance as if she must always have been fed with a quill. Yet upon proper inducement Miss Celestina could draw out her lips to a becoming simper, beyond which she never ventured, not having good teeth. She wore the longest bodice and the largest bustle that had ever been seen west of Detroit; and her curls were so innumerable that certain of the ruder beaux compared her to "an owl in an ivy-bush." In short the young lady had been brought up for a belle and a beauty, and both herself and Mrs. Purfle considered the work crowned in the result.

We have among us so few people that "live on their money," that we look up to such with an instinctive reverence. Whether Mrs. Purfle's income had been exaggerated (as many were inclined to suspect,) was a matter of frequent discussion; but all the world joined in paying her the same attention and deference as if its amount had been ascertained beyond a doubt. She was considered as a leader of the *ton* on all occasions, and being naturally of a gay as well as of a sentimental turn, she helped to enliven the village not a little.

One little peculiarity of Mrs. Purfle, only worth telling as it develops the tenderer elements of her character, has not yet been mentioned. Her morning-room—indeed, her only parlour—was fitted up in a style so unique that the visitor was naturally led to inquire as to the cause of Mrs. Purfle's partiality for a colour not usually much in favour with the ladies. To begin with the principal ornament, the lady herself—she sat always in a tall yellow rocking-chair, dressed in a buff gown and a cap trimmed with paradise ribbons. Nankeen slippers graced her feet, and these, by way of contrast, bore a meandering embroidery in straw-coloured worsteds. Her windows were draped with orange moreen; the cover of her work-table was a monument of her housewifely ingenuity, having been dyed with turmeric by her own thrifty fingers. Her pincushion, founded on a brick, and of course of respectable dimensions, was covered with well-saved triangles of yellow flannel, and edged with a tarnished gold lace. Yellow tissue-paper clothed the frames of the numerous coloured engravings which adorned the walls; and a splendid apron of the same hid the fire-place all summer, and was pinned before the book-shelf in winter. Upon Mrs. Purfle and all these golden accompaniments waited a little yellow boy, whom she had brought from the South with her, and whose name she had changed from Belzy to Brimstone, that he might be in keeping with the rest of the furniture.

The widow's preference for the colour of jealousy was not without a reason and a pertinent one, although her deceased lord had been a person of unsuspected constancy during the six months of their married life. There are some sentiments which can give tenderness even to yellow. Doctor Purfle had been settled in the

city of New Orleans and his wife's comfortable house only a single season, when he fell a victim to the prevailing fever. From this time forward did his faithful relict vow herself to the most odious of hues. "He was all yaller," she would pensively observe, "and I'll be yaller too!" "And, besides," she had been known to add, when speaking to a confidential friend, "it came very handy, for my yaller things hadn't sold as well as I expected."

Having been so happy in her married life, we shall excite no surprise when we confess that Mrs. Purfle's darling object was to secure a husband for her niece. Her own individual objects in life were answered; she had been married, she had changed her name, (very advantageously too, for her own used to be Bore—she always insists that those long tippets the ladies used to wind round their necks were named after her,) she had kept her property, and also acquired in addition the Doctor's cupping-glasses, his saddle-bags, and many other useful articles; and now her sole care was the fortunate disposal of the fair Celestina. Some years had passed since the commencement of her efforts, and Miss Pye did not seem any nearer to the goal than at first; but Mrs. Purfle was not discouraged, for she had, as she said, almost given up, herself, when the Doctor came along, all in a minute like, and she was married without any trouble at all. Hoping for some such windfall, she and Miss Teeny persevered, and, meanwhile, amused themselves as well as they could.

In the interest excited by these two new families—one so busy, and the other so independent—we had almost forgotten Tom Oliver, when some observant eye espied a smoke issuing from his chimney as calmly as if no interval had occurred in its owner's housekeeping; and the neighbour who peeped in to ascertain whether there was a mortal and an honest tenant, found Tom boiling his venison with potatoes, as usual, in a huge pot which held at least a week's provision, and sent forth a savoury steam.

"Why, Tom! is that you?" said neighbour Brumbleback.

"Flesh and blood, and blue veins," was the laconic reply.

"When did you get home?" pursued the inquirer.

"Just as the east was cracking for daylight."

"Where in the world have you been this time?"

"In the world! Why, bless your soul! I've been to Saint Peter's."

"You don't! was he to hum?"

Tom looked up and laughed.

"Brumbleback," said he, "there ain't many saints in the army. They call a fort after Saint Peter, away off on the Mississippi river."

"What notion sent you there?"

"I went after my cousin, John Hanford."

"Do tell! was he a goin' to help you any?"

"I don't want any help. I only went to see him. He was at Kalamazoo, and he wrote me it was rather a busy place, and I thought I'd go out there and take a hand with the rest. You know I tried York State a while last summer?"

"Yes," said Brumbleback, "I know you did, and I expected you'd come back so big that a man couldn't touch you with a ten foot pole. But you didn't stay long enough to get uppish. What sent you back so soon? I've always wanted to know."

"Oh! I found it was no place for me. I went to see my uncle in Jefferson County, and he wanted me to stay with him in place of a son he'd lost; but when I came to try the woods, I gave it up at once. You never saw such mean hunting. I might walk all day without a sight. And there's no room to shoot when you do see any thing. I came within one of shooting the prettiest girl I ever laid eyes on. She was out in the woods looking for wintergreens. I never shall forget how she looked. I thought she was dead, but she had only fainted away, and when I saw she was coming to life, I ran like a *painter*.* I would not have met her eyes for the world. I sent some one else to see to her."

"And didn't you see her again?"

"Not I! I thought I had discovered that the East was no place for me, so I just gathered myself together, shook hands with my uncle, and made tracks westward. I wouldn't have taken the old man's stony farm for a gift. I can make five dollars here where I can one there."

"Well! and what took you to Kalamazoo?" said Brumbleback, who had never before found Tom so communicative.

* Panther.

"Why, John Hanford wrote me that they were going to have a bear-hunt out there, and that, besides, there was a good deal to do, so I thought I'd try my luck. When I got there I found a heavy rain had spoiled the bear-hunt, and my cousin had gone to St. Joseph's to keep a boarding-house. I went on to St. Joseph's, and there found that John had changed his mind, and started three days before for Chicago. I had got into the humour of travelling now, so I thought I'd go too and not give up since I'd come so far to see John. So off I went, but would you believe it! John had just started with a party to Rock River to see what was doing there. I was determined not to be distanced, so I gave chase again. At Rock River I missed him just as I had done before. He had had a better offer to go to Galena and work among the lead mines. I felt sure of him now, so I stayed a few days at Rock River to see what I could, and rest myself a little, and then started for Galena. Lo and behold! John was off to Wheat-Diggins, because he wanted to see a place where they never cut their corn, but turned in their hogs to fat themselves according to their own notion. I'd half a mind to give up, but I thought I'd like to see such curious work too, so off I streaked to Wheat-Diggins. Do you believe, John was off before I got there!"

"Well, perhaps; but you warn't fool enough to follow him any further?"

"Wasn't I! By that time I'd got so gritty, I'd have followed him to the Pacific, rather than have given up. He had gone over the prairies with a party of young men, and there was another party just ready to start, so I was glad of the chance to go with them—for I had never seen a real prairie—and a fine hearty set of fellows they were."

"How did you like the prairies?"

"Right well! There were seventy miles of the way without a house, so we camped out. One prairie that we crossed was twenty-six miles long, sometimes level as a floor, and then again rolling. At times we could see neither tree nor bush, but just a great lake like, frozen over and covered with snow—for it began to be cold by that time. There would be timber-patches that looked at first no bigger than your hand, but when you'd come up to 'em, you'd find they covered four or five acres, and some-

times fifty or an hundred. These patches looked exactly like islands. We camped in these for the sake of shelter and fire-wood. After supper we lay down and slept with our feet to the fire; but we did not dare to sleep long, for fear of getting numb with the cold. So every hour or so we'd get up and wrestle a spell, and then lie down and take another nap. Oh! we had grand times!"

"But what did you do for money?"

"I didn't need much, for generally I couldn't get people to take pay for my lodging. They were glad to see any body from the settlements, and they would ask a great many questions; and by talking round we generally found that I knew somebody they knew, and then they would never take a cent. They would give me a bit of paper with their name and where they lived, to give to their acquaintance when I went back. Once they did that when I did not know the man they asked about, but had only heard him preach. Yet when I reached St. Peter's, two thousand miles from home, I had only two dollars in my pocket. *But I found my cousin!*"

"Shy game, *I* tell ye!" said Brumbleback; "but how did you get home?"

"Oh, they were building a saw mill not far from there, and John engaged as a hand, and they offered me twenty dollars a month and my board, if I'd stay too. I did not let them know how low I was in pocket, but kept a stiff upper lip, and made as if I didn't care whether I worked or no. At length I told 'em if they'd give me thirty dollars, I'd stay. So they agreed, and I got enough to pay my passage home, buy a new suit of clothes at Chicago, and leave a nest-egg in my pocket after all."*

When Tom had finished his recital he inquired in his turn as to the course of things at home during their absence. He was duly informed of the accession to our population and many other interesting particulars. Brumbleback's account of the two new belles was not very fascinating. "The chunky one," said he, "is fixed off like a poppy-show, and never lets the draw-strings

* If Tom's yarn seems a tough one, I can only say it was taken down from his own lips, and preserved as being characteristic of the habits of the country.

out of her lips. T'other gal is likely enough, but the mother's a blazer! Whoever marries Emmy, had better look out for his ears. The mill-clack is nothing to the old woman's tongue."

Tom stayed at home long enough to clean his rifle and eat his dinner, and then went out hunting to rest himself after his journey. He was passing by a cranberry-marsh about half a mile from the village, when he heard, quite near him, the sound of feminine distress, loud and real. He dashed in among the tangled bushes, and found a young lady sticking in the half-frozen mud. It was Miss Celestina Pye, and she certainly had no draw-strings in her lips just then. Tom observed afterwards, (with less than his usual gallantry,) "that nothing but a pig in a gate ever beat her." He extricated her very ably—a lamentable figure—her dress torn by the inconsiderate briers, and her prim face unshaped by the agony of her terror. She had been searching for those choicest of cranberries which are found still on the bushes after the winter is past. The water in which they chiefly grow is often frozen over, deceptively enough, so that a plunge is not unusual. But Miss Pye's eastern fears of rattlesnakes were still in full force, and as soon as she found herself in the marsh, she jumped to the conclusion that she was bitten to death as a matter of course.

After her rescue occurred the difficulty of presenting such a figure on her walk through the village. Here Tom's natural politeness suggested a short cut, to facilitate which he took down a part of the rail-fence and pointed out to the young lady a path by which she might reach the back of her aunt's domain without betraying her disaster to the public.

During all this, it is not to be supposed that Miss Celestina, though her eyes were small and somewhat obscured by mud, had not managed to perceive that her deliverer was a young man, a stranger, and one whose splendid proportions and fine face would have commanded notice any where. She looked through her torn green veil and her multitudinous curl-papers (for she was cranberrying incog.) at our hero's dark eyes, and found herself very much in love, as was quite natural and proper under the circumstances.

That evening at sunset Tom presented himself at Mrs. Purfle's

door with a buck nicely dressed, inquiring whether the lady wished to purchase.

"How much?" asked Mrs. Purfle.

"A dollar," said the hunter.

"That's too much," observed Mrs. Purfle. "It's more than you ought to ask, young man," she said, very solemnly, and with an air of reproof.

The deer weighed some sixty or seventy pounds—perhaps more. Tom moved onward.

"Can you let me have half of it for fifty cents?"

"Never cut," said Tom, who seldom wasted words in such cases.

Just then Miss Pye made her appearance. She was very smart, and her head quivered with subdivided ringlets. When she saw Tom with the venison at his feet, she took it for granted that he had called to inquire after her health, and that the game was an offering to her charms. What wonder that the advancing smile was a gracious one! Or what wonder that the corners of her mouth took a downward curve when Tom flung his buck upon his shoulder and walked off without looking at her!

"Why, aunt!" said Miss Teeny, dolefully, "that's the very one!"

"What one?" said Mrs. Purfle.

"Why the one that helped me out of the marsh! I dare say he came to see me. If I had had my other frock on he would have known me."

Now it was so well understood between Mrs. Purfle and her niece that a *beau* for the latter, (technically speaking,) was the one thing needful, that it was no longer ranked among subjects debateable. There was nothing to be said about it, even by Mrs. Purfle. So she stood and looked after Tom in silence, musing upon the ill-timed thriftiness that had driven so fine a young man from the vicinity of Miss Pye's attractions.

"Teeny!" she said at length, with her eyes still travelling down the street.—"Teeny! it is a long while since you called upon Emma Levering. Get your things, quick! and go down there!"

This speech began *moderato*, but the *crescendo* was so rapid

that the close was *prestissimo*. Miss Pye, following the direction of her aunt's eye, saw that Tom had stopped at Mrs. Levering's, and she lost not a breath in getting her bonnet.

At Mrs. Levering's gate stood Mrs. Levering herself, her cap border blown back by the chill wind, and her tongue in full activity, enlightening the young hunter's mind as to the true and proper value of venison "out here in the woods."

"It costs you nothing at all," she said, "but just the powder and ball it takes to shoot 'em, and that can't be much, for powder's only six shillings a pound, and as for shot, you can put in old buttons or any thing."

Tom was looking at the speaker with an eye that said as plainly as eye could speak, "Have you almost done?" But he waited, for he was too civil to walk off while a lady was speaking, and it was difficult to catch a moment when Mrs. Levering was *not* speaking.

Miss Pye, with the first breath she could command, asked for Emma, and Mrs. Levering called her. Tom was taking the opportunity to move off, but ere he had shouldered his burthen he caught sight of a face that charmed him to the spot. Had he indeed seen it before? Miss Teeny, scarce greeting Emma, turned at once to the handsome hunter, and in her choicest terms thanked him for his assistance in extricating her from her perilous situation.

Tom could with difficulty be induced to comprehend what she meant, for it was not easy to recognize in the rainbow-tinted speaker the muddy heroine of the morning. And then he seemed to feel himself in "a scrape," and to be puzzled for a suitable reply to so much gratitude.

"I thought I never *should* have got out!" said Miss Teeny, rolling up her little eyes with a pathetic expression of self-pity.

"Oh!" said Tom, "I've got a cow out of there before now."

Tom meant simply that he had done a much more difficult thing than the helping of a young lady out of the marsh—but the illustration was not fortunately chosen. Yet Miss Celestina forbore to notice the error, and only said very graciously that her aunt would take the venison.

"Venison!" said Emma; "oh, mother, poor Jack said he thought he could eat some venison if he could get it."

"He shall have it and welcome," said Tom, throwing the deer

saddlewise on the rail of the little porch, and turning away quickly. In vain did the widow and Miss Teeny call after our retreating hero. He barely raised his cap from his brow as he passed, and then, clearing the ground with a hunter's stride, disappeared round the first corner, before the trio had recovered from their astonishment.

"Very odd!" exclaimed Miss Celestina Pye, "when aunt said she would take it."

"Odd, indeed!" responded Mrs. Levering, "when he wouldn't look at anything less than a dollar just now!"

Emma said nothing, but busied herself in preparing some of the venison for her sick brother, with possibly an occasional recollection of the gallant huntsman.

From the period of Tom's return from the expedition to the Mississippi, all his friends remarked a change in his appearance and habits. Not only was his dress more cared for, but his way of living was essentially civilized; and his manner lost that tinge of untameableness which had formerly characterized it. He attended the singing-school regularly, and often escorted home some of the fair ones who brightened these evening gatherings. He never indeed went so far as to volunteer a call, but he would sometimes accept an invitation to a tea party, though he generally amused himself on such occasions by playing with the dog, or with the baby if there was no dog. He was seldom caught looking at a young lady; but if he did look at any one, it was at Miss Celestina Pye. She even thought that she had discovered the costume which best pleased him, for he never looked at her so much as when she was dressed in her buff calico with large purple sprigs. So she used to put on this dress very frequently, with a suitable accompaniment of thready curls and gay ribbons.

Emma Levering all this time, the mere drudge of the most thrifty and exacting of mothers, was in a manner forgotten by all. She was the only pretty girl in the village circle that Tom Oliver never was seen to look at, although he was unceasing in his attentions to her sick brother, whom he supplied with the choicest game the woods afforded. Tom was an odd fellow, and everybody but Miss Pye and Mrs. Purfle thought that he was resolved to be an old bachelor.

About these days, Mrs. Purfle, who was of an active and enterprising turn of mind, and something of a diplomatist withal, thought proper to give a large party—no unusual expedient to enhance one's importance, and to make one's acquaintance coveted. Everybody was invited and great preparation made, though there was unfortunately no possibility of enlarging the small parlour, nor any of the suite of apartments of which that capped the climax. But if our good lady had been initiated into the fashionable notion of a "feed," she could not have provided more bounteously for those who were to be squeezed within her walls. Tom had a note of course; and he was further favoured with a P. S., asking if he could "as well as not" provide Mrs. Purfle with game for the occasion. What he sent would have made the fortune of a city supper; and, in addition to this, there were days' works of cake, and pies, and custards, not to speak of an unspeakable variety of minor adjuncts. The very gathering of the cups and saucers, and plates, and knives, and spoons, was a serious business. In the country it is still customary to provide for as many guests as you invite—another proof that we are behind the age.

Two o'clock came, and with it a good portion of the company. Even from the neighbouring settlements whole wagon-loads were imported, whose bustling Sunday clothes filled Mrs. Purfle's yellow parlour, borrowed chairs and all. At first the silence was prodigious; then would be heard an occasional burst of giggle, quickly smothered; but gradually rose a continuous hum, which swelled ere long into an undistinguishable clatter, enlivened ever and anon by such explosions of laughter as are heard only at the West. During all this time Tom Oliver did not make his appearance. It grew dusk—three candles were lighted on the mantelpiece, in front of a great many black profiles; the tea (secretly put back) was at length made—Miss Pye's eyes were anything but auspicious—when in came Tom, dressed in his Chicago suit, and looking handsomer than ever. Oh, how the room brightened in Miss Celestina's eyes! It was as if all three of the candles had been snuffed at once!

Our bashful hero had scarcely time to cast a glance about him (over the heads of most of the company) when he was called

upon by Mrs. Purfle to lead the way into "the other room," as the kitchen was modestly denominated. Tom had not ascertained who was and who was not present, so he gave his hand, at a venture, to Miss Polly Troome, the blacksmith's tall daughter, gallantly handing her to the long tea-table, and seating her opposite to a promising bowl of apple-sauce. Other ladies were soon seated, and when every corner of the board (and they were many, since no two tables in the neighbourhood matched in size or shape,) was filled, it became the duty of the beaux to play the part of waiters, which devoir was performed with various grace by the various youths concerned. A roast pig was to be carved and a huge chicken-pie distributed; bowls of pickles, and plates of hot biscuits were to be handed about; and, worse than all, a ceaseless succession of cups of tea required all the skill and discretion of the *preux chevaliers*. Some scalding there was, but not serious; much pretty shrieking, and not a little unrefined laughter. Miss Pye's new blue silk apron was the recipient of a saucer of pudding; old Mrs. Spindle made her usual disparaging remarks about the strength of tea, in an audible whisper; poor little Brim was trodden upon and tumbled over by everybody —but upon the whole, the party presented the true party aspect, saving and excepting some few conventional prejudices as to the dress of the company and the nature of the refreshments.

But in the midst of the feast a blank occurred—felt more particularly by one of the gay assemblage, yet perceived by numerous others. Tom Oliver was missing. What could this mean? Was he preparing something characteristically odd, to help along the general hilarity? This was thought of, but conjectures died away after a while, for the young hunter appeared no more. The usual amusements went on; all sorts of forfeits were played —"scorn" and "criminal," and whatever gives an excuse for some little romping and kissing, but all was begun and finished without Tom. This was like a sprinkling of cold water, for Tom had become a general favourite with the young people.

But it is time to account for our hero. It had been whispered about that Emma Levering could not come, on account of the illness of her brother, but no one thought of the circumstance in connection with Tom's disappearance. Yet it was to the busy

widow's that he had gone from the gay assembly, and there, while all was gayety at Mrs. Purfle's grand party, he was already established as a watcher for the night, while the weary family had gone quietly to bed, trusting to his well-known reputation as a nurse. This was the last thing his young companions would have guessed, yet it was the most natural thing in the world for Tom to think of. We hardly think that the fair face of Emma had any share in originating the benevolent impulse—at least there is no testimony to this effect—but we doubt not there was a sympathy for her overtasked condition. Tom was a practical man, and Mrs. Levering's exactions were notorious. If he had but known what pity is akin to, we think he might perhaps have eschewed it; but Tom read no poetry.

This generosity, however, was like much that passes for such —it was at the cost of another. Tom cared nothing about the party, but poor Miss Teeny felt that all her pains had been thrown away, since the handsome hunter had slighted the occasion so cruelly. When she had heard what called him away, she was disposed to be vexed with her unpretending neighbour; but she very soon ascertained that Emma had been sent to bed immediately on Tom's arrival, so that they had scarcely even met. So she was encouraged again, feeling sure that her own attractions must be victorious in fair field. Much did she walk for her health during that rainy spring, and numerous were the errands which took her to Mrs. Brumbleback's, the way to whose house lay directly past Tom's gate. Yet she found the huntsman very hard to encourage. If he was standing by his door when she passed, he was very apt to go in and shut it without waiting to bow to her; and if he happened to be at his well, he would go on drawing water without once turning his head. It was very odd that he should be so bashful.

Tom's well was a model of a well—for a new country we mean. It was curbed at the top with a cut from a hollow buttonwood tree, about four feet in diameter on the inside, and perfectly smooth, inside and out. This curb rested on a layer of plank some two feet within the ground, and from this floor downward the well was built of brick in the neatest manner, and the clear water filled it almost to the platform. It was partly roofed over,

and provided with a great trough of white wood *au naturel*, well befitting the beauty of the whole structure.*

This was an object of just pride to the owner, for it was the work of his own hands, and he had been the fortunate finder of the tree which had afforded curbs for several wells in the neighbourhood. It was placed near his cottage under the shadow of an elm which chanced to grow just in the right place.

To this well came Tom one afternoon just as the sun was setting, driving a pair of "two-year-olds," and singing very audibly and in no bad taste, "Some love to roam," which he had caught from Mr. Russell's own lips as that "vocalist" passed, like a musical meteor, through our far-away state. He was just executing "A life in the woods for me!" with an attempt at the original cadenza, when he looked over his beautiful well-curb and saw—

Mercy on me—what an exclamation, Tom! How would that sound at "the East?"

It was Miss Celestina Pye, standing on the planks, and looking upward with a piteous glance.

"Oh, Mr. Oliver! I'm so scar't! I'm almost out of my senses!"

And in her distraction she adjusted her curls, and threw back her green veil.

"What's scar't you this time?" said Tom, with odious coolness.

"Why, I thought I heard a bull! I'm sure I thought I did; and if you only knew how 'fraid I am of a bull! Aunt says I ought never to walk out alone, I'm so timid!"

"I should think she was right," observed Tom, drily.

"And now," continued Miss Celestina Pye, "how I am to get out of this place—I'm sure I don't know."

"How did you get in?"

"Oh! I was so frightened, you see, that I climbed over that low place by the trough. I'm afraid you'll have to lift me out! I feel so very weak."

"Wait a moment," said Tom; and Miss Pye waited a good

* A well precisely similar to Tom's may be seen near the door of an inn, some twelve miles west of Detroit, on the Grand River road.

many moments, expecting the return of her squire. By and bye, when she had begun to find the well rather chilly, she heard a footstep.

"Oh! here you are at last," said she.

"Yes, here I be!" answered Brumbleback's gruff voice, "and here's my ox-chain for you to climb up by," and he lowered the ox-chain, looped, having the ends fastened outside. "There! you can climb up by that, easy enough!" observed this squire of dames; "you needn't be afeared, for it would bear five ton."

"But where's Mr. Oliver?" asked the doleful Celestina.

"He's off! he thought he heard something in the wheat field, and he told me to help you out."

Miss Pye's walk homeward was not a pleasant one; she was a little damp and dreadfully crestfallen; but Mrs. Purfle assured her that she was certain Tom "felt so" he could not venture to take her out, for fear of letting her down the well.

The oil of her aunt's flattery served once more to trim the lamp of hope in Miss Teeny's heart; aunt had gone through it all, and surely she ought to know. So Miss Pye refreshed her array, and sat down to her knitting, Mrs. Purfle thinking it probable, "considering all things," that Tom would call.

Miss Teeny had picked up the lamp-wick with a pin several times, and begun to yawn pretty frequently, when she heard Tom's ringing laugh as he passed the window. He *was* coming, after all!

Alas! he had only been to carry a brace of prairie-hens to Jack Levering. Miss Celestina Pye put her curls in twenty-two papers, and then went desperately to bed.

With the morning light, however, came a ray of mental illumination. That song! the gallant hunter was fond of music! Miss Teeny had something called a piano, which, though lacking several important strings, still was capable of an atrocious noise which passed with some for music. This had never yet been brought to bear upon Tom; but the summer was coming and such a resource must no longer be neglected. Among the poetical scraps in Miss Pye's album was the following—

Music hath charms to soothe the savage *beast*—

How much more then one who only hunted such animals! So the tinkling torment was put in requisition, and Mons Meg herself could scarcely have been more noisy. "Oh! come with me!" "Meet me by moonlight!" "Leave me not!" were the pathetic adjurations which now arrested the attention of the passers-by; but, as ill-luck would have it, just about that time Tom got a habit of going to town by the back street. However, the weather had now become pleasant, and Mrs. Purfle happening to be in the garden at the time he usually passed, politely invited him in, saying that Celestina had been tuning up the piano quite nice. Tom could not refuse, and once in, he underwent the whole without flinching. Miss Pye's voice was not exactly a *contralto*, indeed it was puzzling to determine the class; since what there was of it was so strained and filtered through a very small mouth, and a most miserably pinched nose, that it resembled the chirping of a mouse in a cheese. But the accompaniment was loud enough to make up for that. This was extemporaneous entirely, but when she confined her bass to the key-note, she made out pretty well for uninstructed ears. It was only when she became enthusiastic and branched out into involuntary chromatics, that it grew absolutely unendurable. This pass had been nearly attained when Tom asked for "Fare thee well!" This not being on Miss Teeny's list, he was about taking his leave when she volunteered "Faithless Emma." Tom sat down again, heard the song through, asked a repetition, and then seized his cap resolutely.

"Are you going to singing-school to night? *I* am," said Miss Teeny, all in a breath.

"I don't know whether I shall or no," said stony-hearted Tom, and he bolted rather unceremoniously.

"Well, I declare!" said Mrs. Purfle, "that fellow is the hardest to manage!"

The fact is, that the tactics of Mrs. Purfle and Miss Pye ought to have brought Tom down long before; but he was like Wellington at Waterloo, and did not know when he was beaten. He must have borne a charmed life, to walk unharmed within point-blank range of such formidable artillery; but we are unable to furnish our readers with the recipe. Gay's sweet ballad says,

"*Love* turns the balls that round me fly,
Lest precious tears should fall from Susan's eye."

But Tom had as yet paid Love no homage, and we well know that wicked power does nothing for nothing. Our conjectures as to Tom's safeguard point indeed toward that bewitching face which his rifle had so nearly marred, but would a roving hunter remember one look so long?

But Miss Pye's ammunition was not yet exhausted. The very next Sunday saw her, laced almost to extinction, on her way to meeting, arrayed in her most seducing paraphernalia, her face white and her hands shining purple through their lace gloves, from the energy with which she had striven to be delicate. She had seen a belle faint in public at "the East;" she had observed the solicitude of her attendant knight; and she did not know why such things might not be done by some people as well as others. So she took her seat on the women's side of the narrow passage which divides the two rows of benches in our school-room, determined to find the vulnerable part in Tom's heart, if indeed there was one—which she began to doubt.

This mode of parting the rougher from the gentler sex in public, prevails wherever seats are common property—the why is not so easy to determine. If designed to prevent stray thoughts, it is quite a mistake, for by this arrangement eyes are left at full liberty, nay, are placed under a sort of necessity for encountering. If to secure attention to the speaker, it is still more unfortunate, for the deadly cross-fire from the sides is far more effective than the scattering fire from the platform. But it suited Miss Teeny's purpose, for it brought her face to face with her indomitable enemy.

She had done her work so effectually at home that there was little to be done in meeting. The fainting had very nearly come off in earnest, and her face began to look deadly blue very soon after the commencement of the sermon. At length she fell back on the desk before which she was sitting.

All was now confusion and dismay, for we are not accustomed to such things. Mrs. Purfle bustled about, and called upon Mr. Oliver to help her take her niece in the open air. But the minister,

with a solemn air of reproof, just then requested the congregation to sit down, adding, in an authoritative and awful manner,

"Deacon Grinderson! will you help that young woman out?"

So poor Teeny was carried out, not very gracefully, by Deacon Grinderson and a young clodpole whom he summoned to his aid; and it required but very little water dashed in her face to bring her to her senses, and particularly to the sense that it was "no go," as Tom would have said if he had understood the affair.

"Now cut her binder, and she'll do," said Deacon Grinderson's assistant, borrowing a figure from the wheat field, as was quite natural, seeing that Miss Teeny's contour, exclusive of the supplementary bustle, was not unlike that of a stout sheaf. But there was very little spirit in her just now.

We know not that Miss Teeny could ever have been inspired, even by the powerful afflatus of her aunt's flattery, to make another attempt at so inaccessible a heart; but, ere long, fate threw in her way an opportunity which skill could scarcely have commanded. She had succeeded in reducing herself by sighing, pickles, and silk braid, to something nearer a sentimental outline, when our part of the country was enlightened by a visit from a nephew of Dr. Purfle's, whom his lady had known at the South —a decided genius, and one of the universal kind. This individual had had the misfortune to lose both his feet by exposure at the North, and he would have been at his wits' end for a living if those wits had been only as comprehensive as the wits of common people. But he managed to live very much at his ease, having a man to wait on him and supply the only deficiency of which he had ever been conscious. Mr. Ashdod Cockles came among us in the character of an artist, having his wagon loaded with wax-figures, puppets, magic-lanterns, and all those temptations which the pockets of western people, lank as they are, always find irresistible—including a hand-organ of course; and he put up at Mrs. Purfle's.

Most exhilarating were the preparations, which now filled everybody's mouth. The village ball-room was to be the scene of the grand exhibition of Mr. Cockles' glory; and the stairs which led to that honoured chamber were well worn during that day of ceaseless bustle and excitement. Not that the common eye was

permitted to get even a glimpse of the mysteries within, for a thick curtain was suspended inside, so that the assistants could pass in and out a hundred times without one's getting a single peep. But the boys and idlers still thought they *should* see something; so there they stayed from morning till night—scarcely taking time to eat.

But while all promised so fair for the multitude, what was the surprise and grief of Mr. Ashdod Cockles to find that one of his wax figures, nay, the one of all others that he could worst spare, had been completely crushed by the superincumbent weight of the hand-organ. The Sleeping Beauty! That *she* should have been lost! What is a wax-work without a Sleeping Beauty! Dire was the disappointment of Mr. Cockles, and loud his lamentations, (in private,) and much did he try to make his factotum acknowledge that he had erred in the packing. Nick knew his business too well for that; but he nevertheless condescended to suggest a remedy—viz.: that Mr. Cockles should induce some pretty girl of the village to be dressed in the glittering drapery of the crushed nymph, and perform the part for that night only. This seemed the more feasible that the figure was to be covered up in bed, and the performance would thus involve no fatigue. So it only remained to obtain the handsome face, and touching this delicate point Mr. Cockles consulted Mrs. Purfle.

"Miss Emmy's the prettiest!" said Brim, who stood by grinning from ear to ear.

"Get out, Brim!" said Mrs. Purfle, accompanying the hint with a resounding box on the ear; "get out! you're a fool!"

Then turning to the artist with a bland smile, she communicated to him in a whisper her belief that Celestina would undertake the part, if she was properly requested.

"Ahem!" said Mr. Ashdod Cockles, who was troubled with a cold; "ahem! yes, ma'am—but it would be asking quite too much of your niece. I think we had better—"

"Not at all, not at all!" insisted the lady; "Teeny is so obliging she'll not think anything of it. I'll ask her at once."

"But," persisted Mr. Cockles, fidgeting a good deal, "she is really quite too short for the character. A taller figure—"

"Oh! you forget she is to be conveyed under the quilt! I'll manage all that," said the zealous diplomatist, "I'll dress her, and everything."

And she left the room and returned in a very short time with Miss Pye's unhesitating consent. So Mr. Cockles could not but be very much obliged; and Mrs. Purfle, in the highest spirits, sent Brim off at once to Mr. Oliver's, to tell him he must be sure to come to the exhibition. "And Brim," she added, "if you tell him a word about you know what, I'll skin ye!" A favourite figure of speech of Mrs. Purfle's.

"What exhibition?" said Tom, who had but just returned from the woods.

"Oh, every thing in the world!" said Brim, who was as much excited as any body; "and Miss Teeny—" but here he thought of his skin, and no persuasions of Tom could extort another word on that point, though he was fluent on the main subject.

The evening came at last, and the weather chanced to be pleasanter than it generally is on great occasions. The ball-room was elegantly fitted up with suspended crosses of wood stuck with tallow candles,—rather drippy, but you must keep out of their way,—(I have seen gentlemen's coats completely iced with spermaceti, which, if more genteel, is also more destructive.) Instead of glass cases, a screen or medium of dark-coloured gauze was interposed between the eye and the wax figures, in order to produce the requisite illusion. The puppets and the magic-lantern came first in order, and so great was the delight of the spectators that it would seem that any after-show must have been an anti-climax; but the experienced Mr. Cockles knew better. It was not until all this was done, that he ordered Nick to draw aside the baize which had veiled the grand attraction. Great clapping and rapping ensued, and it was some time before Mr. Cockles could venture to begin, this being a part of the exhibition in which he expected to shine personally.

"This, ladies and gentlemen," he began, at the upper end of the room, "this is the New Orleans beauty; she was engaged to be married to two gentlemen at once, and to avoid the torments of jealousy, they settled it between 'em, and first shot her and

then each other through the heart! and they're all buried in one tomb; and I should have had the tomb too, only it was rather heavy to carry."

Every body crowded to this interesting sight.

"This," continued the exhibiter, in a high-toned and theatrical voice, waving at the same time a gilded wand, which excited much admiration, "is the celebrated Miss M'Crea and her murderers, from likenesses taken on the spot by an eye-witness."

A shudder ran through the throng at this announcement, and the grinning Indians were closely scrutinized, and the fierceness and many evil qualities of their race commented on in an under tone.

"Here is a revolutionary character, ladies and gentlemen," Mr. Cockles went on, as his familiar edged him along on his wheel-chair; and he pointed to a stumpy old man in a blue coat faced with red, who brandished a wooden sword as high as the ceiling would allow.

"This was one of my forefathers," observed the orator, with no little swell; "my great-great-grandfather, or some such relation. He was a man by the name of Horatio Cockles, that cut away the bridge at Rome just as the British was coming across it. You've all heard of Rome, I suppose?"

A murmur of assent went round; and one man observed, "I was born and brought up within five *mile* of it, but I never heard tell o' that 'ere feller!"

"Ay, yes! maybe not," said Mr. Cockles, quite undisturbed, "but do you understand history?"

The objector was posed, and the orator proceeded.

"This is Lay Fyett, and this is Bonypart, with a man's head that he has just cut off with his sword. He used to do that whenever he got mad."

A shudder, with various exclamations.

"But here," said Mr. Cockles, drawing aside with a flourishing air, a mysterious-looking curtain, which had excited a good deal of curiosity during the evening, "this here is the Sleeping Beauty. Her infant daughter got broke a-coming."

And there lay a female figure, in whose well-rouged cheeks and dyed ringlets no one recognized the heiress of Mrs. Purfle's

worldly substance. Even the eyebrows, which nature had left white, were entirely altered by the experienced skill of the artist, who had felt himself at liberty to put them on where he thought they would look best, the original ones being invisible by candle-light. A very elegant cap, full trimmed with artificial flowers, had been arranged by Mrs. Purfle; and the sky-blue pillow fringed with gold, and the purple quilt which belonged to the character, made altogether a very magnificent affair, though Mr. Ashdod Cockles had not thought it prudent to suspend more than a single candle within the chintz curtains and the gauze blind.

Just as the concealing screen had been withdrawn, and while a buzz of admiration was still in circulation, Tom Oliver, who had been in no haste to obey Mrs. Purfle's hint, made his way into the room. He took a momentary glance at the attractions which lined the walls, and then sought the object which now fixed the eager crowd. It took a good look to satisfy him; but with the help of Brim's hint and certain potent recollections, the truth came upon him at once; and with a very audible "pshaw!" he turned on his heel and made for the door. The string by which the Sleeping Beauty's candle was suspended passing along near the ceiling, caught Tom's cap in his hasty retreat, and ruin ensued. In an instant Miss Teeny's gay head-dress was all in a blaze, and one whole side of her curls was burnt off before the cruel flames could be smothered. Tom was among the most active in endeavouring to repair the mischief he had done, and then, much mortified, darted out of the room. As his evil stars must have decreed, he met Emma Levering at the top of the stairs, and if ours were of the fashionable single-flight order, broken bones would have certainly ensued. But most fortunately there was a saving platform, which received Tom and his victim, in time to prevent so serious a catastrophe. As it was, however, the pretty Emma was a good deal hurt, and to Tom's eager questions she could only answer with a burst of tears. So Tom, without ceremony, caught her up in his arms, and ran with her to her mother's, which was not far distant; and then, after more apologies than he ever made before in the whole course of his life, he took his leave, and hid his head beneath his own roof.

Before Emma's bruises got well, it was all over with Tom.

The barriers about his heart seemed to have been fractured by the fall; and Cupid is not slow in making the most of such advantages. Tom Oliver forgot to hunt, but occupied his time instead, in building an addition to his house, and putting a new fence about his door-yard. What arguments he may have found necessary to overcome Emma's resentment against him, we are not informed; but we are assured that it was not until he was obliged to own she had wounded his heart that he mustered courage to tell her that he came very near being beforehand with her, away off in Jefferson County. The fact of their betrothment became known in due time by the lamentations of Mrs. Levering, who thought it very unkind in Emma to be willing to leave her for any body else. Few of the neighbours could conscientiously agree with her in this view of Emma's choice. Most people thought it very natural; and Emma succeeded in reconciling her mother to the change by the suggestion that Tom could fill the place which Jack's ill-health prevented him from taking.

Miss Pye's ringlets were a long time growing, during which interval she remained much at home, in rather low spirits. Emma is benevolently waiting until the fair Celestina is presentable, in order that she may stand bridesmaid, at her own urgent request. Mrs. Purfle is understood to have been so much discouraged by the ill success of her efforts in behalf of her niece, that she declares it her fixed determination to let her take her chance in future. This resolve, if adhered to, gives hopes that history may yet record a happy termination of all Miss Pye's anxieties; since, whether in town or country, no labour is more apt to defeat itself than that which has for its object the acquisition of the grand desideratum—a husband.

OLD THOUGHTS ON THE NEW YEAR.

"Il mondo invecchia
E invecchiando intristisce."

Tasso's "Aminta."

The world is growing older
And wiser day by day:
Every body knows beforehand
What you're going to say!
We used to laugh and frolic;
Now we must behave!
Poor old Fun is dead and buried—
Pride dug his grave.

Free Translation.

There are doubtless many new things to be said about the New Year, if one had wit enough to think of them; but an' if it be not so, may we not think over our last year's thoughts, or those which pleased us ten years ago? It is certain that Providence sends us this holiday season, with all its stirring influences, once every year; and doubtless intends it should be enjoyed by thousands who never had an original thought in their lives. So we will write down our roving fancies as they rise, and leave them to be woven into the fire-light reveries of just such comfortable people.

"What does 'holiday' mean, George?" said we once to a shouting urchin of some seven years standing, as he was tossing up his cap and huzzaing at the thought of a vacation. "What does 'holiday' mean?"

He stopped, looked serious, and then replied

"Why—I don't know—but—I always thought it was because the boys holla so when they are let out of school."

We predicted on the spot that George would write a dictionary

if he lived long enough. A decidedly etymological genius, and quite original; for he owed but little to books, to our certain knowledge.

We cannot hope to make as lucky a guess on the origin of the New Year festival; but we will venture to say, nothing could be more natural than the disposition to observe this way-mark on life's swift-rolling course. In proof of this, the practice of noticing anniversaries has prevailed from the earliest times. It is only in these wondrously wise days, that the notion has arisen that it is being too minute and vulgar to recognize occasions so revered by our fathers:

"We take no note of time save by its loss,"

in another sense than that of the poet. We are disposed to "cut" holidays, as we do other antiquated worthies. Then again the young and gay, in the levity of their hearts, think it tedious to mingle with their joyance any touch of old-time remembrances. We admit that the New Year, though a season for placid and hopeful smiles, is scarcely one for laughter; yet we might (under privilege of our gravity,) inquire whether an element of sobriety may not sometimes be profitable, even in our pleasure. The bereaved and sorrowful tell us that the habit of commemorating particular days only makes more striking the chill blanks in the social circle; pointing out the vacant chair; recalling the missing voice, already but too keenly remembered. This is true; but while sorrow is yet new and fresh, what is there that does *not* bring up the beloved? And after the great Consoler has done his blessed office, and grief is mellowed into sadness, do we not attach a double value to whatever awakens most vividly the cherished memory?

Gifts and keepsakes and little surprises used to be a pretty part of the holiday season; and in Europe the New Year is still the time of all others for *cadeaux*, and *souvenirs*, and *gages d'amitié*, and *gages d'amour*. But the increase of luxury and the cultivation of pride have almost spoiled all these pleasant things for us. I fear we have leavened such matters with the commercial spirit. Presents are made a sort of traffic, or a device of ostentation. When emulation begins, sentiment is lost. The moment we ad-

mit the idea that our generosity or our splendour will attract admiration; the moment we think that our friend, if poor, will receive our new-year gift as payment for some past kindness, or, if rich, that he will be sure to give something still more elegant in return, the present is degraded into an article of merchandise. Indeed, costliness is no proper element of a mere present, since a symbol is all we want.

In England the celebration of New Year is almost lost in that of Christmas, which is a high and universal festival; whether kept exactly in accordance with its true meaning and intent we shall not here stop to inquire. Be this as it may, its approach arouses "the fast-anchor'd isle" to its very heart. Even threadbare court-gaiety receives an accession of something like sentient life; and maids of honour new furbish their languid smiles, and gentlemen-in-waiting pocket their scented 'kerchiefs, no longer needed to veil inadmissible yawns. If high life brighten, how much more the common folk, always so wisely ready to be pleased! The housekeeper spends her evenings for six weeks stoning "plums" in preparation for prelatic mince-pies and national puddings. Huge sirloins of beef jostle at the corners of the streets. The confectioner gives an additional touch of enchantment to his sparkling paradise, which needed not this to make it irresistible to the longing eyes that linger round it, unconsciously endowing each individual temptation with the dazzling beauty of the whole, and so really coveting all, though wishing only for a modest portion. Christmas taxes all the invention of all the artists in Pleasure's train for the production of novelties and excellences in their several departments, and as there is not time for a renewal of energy before New Year, they blend the two occasions, and rejoice double tides. Even the poet, though not always in the way when money is to be made, finds his services now in request, and enjoys the farther delight of hearing his darling verses chanted by the far-sounding throat of the street-singer: true fame this, and not posthumous, like that of most poets. Verses like those which follow, married to airs well deserving such union, awaken the Queen's subjects earlier than they like on Christmas morning:

"The moon shines bright
And the stars give a light
A little before 'tis day,
And bid us awake and pray.
Awake! awake! good people all!
Awake and you shall hear . . .
. . . .
The life of Man
Is but a span,
And cut down in his flower.
We're here to-day and gone to-morrow;
We're all dead in an hour.

"O teach well your children, men,
The while that you are here;
It will be better for your souls
When your corpse lie on the bier.

"To-day you may be alive, dear man,
With many a thousand pound;
To-morrow you may be dead, dear man,
And your corpse laid under ground;
With a turf at your head, dear man,
And another at your feet;
Your good deeds and your bad ones
They will together meet.
God bless the ruler of this house
And send him long to reign;
And many a happy Christmas
May he live to see again.

"My song is done, I must be gone;
I can stay no longer here;
God bless you all, both great and small,
And send you a jovial New Year."

So runs a "Christmas carol," entitled "Divine Mirth," bought in the streets of London not many years ago. But we are like our transatlantic neighbours—letting Christmas swallow up New Year. To return from these "specimens of English poetry."

We KNICKERBOCKERS date our New-Year festivities from our honoured Dutch progenitors; and it should be considered treason even to propose the discontinuance of such time-honoured commemorations. Among the innovations of the day, few try our patience more severely than those pseudo-refinements upon plea-

sure, which have been devised by the little great and the meanly proud of our land, who in their agonizing efforts after a superiority to which neither nature nor education has given them a claim, hesitate not to sacrifice much for which they will never offer an equivalent to society. An adherence to ancient usages belongs to those who are accustomed to the enjoyments of wealth, and covet the heightening power of association; who feel their position to be secure, and therefore enjoy it with dignity, and make no feverish efforts at display. These still keep up the social round on the first day of the year, with its cordial greeting, its hospitable welcome, and its whole-souled *abandon*, symbolical at least of a forgetting of all causes of feud, and a renewing of ancient good-will, however interrupted. There is a primitive relish about these things to those who understand them; but to the merely fashionable, who think only of the quantity of plate which it is possible to exhibit on the occasion, the splendour and costliness of the refreshments, and above all, the number of *stylish* names which may be enrolled among the hundreds of unmeaning visiters, it is *caviare* indeed. Their spirit is a profane one; it fancies that money will buy every thing.

We would not insist upon the full adherence to primitive customs; since that would include rather more stimulus than accords with our notions of propriety; and we have heard too that the KNICKERBOCKER practice of presenting each guest with a shield-like "cookie," though an excellent one for the bakers, was wont to prove rather inconvenient to some thorough-going visiters, who were in danger of meeting with the fate of the damsel of old, who was crushed under the weight of gifts somewhat similar. Tradition informs us that the Dutch Dominies, who were especial favourites, used to be obliged to leave whole pyramids of splendid cookies—suns, moons, General Washington, Santa-Claus, and all—at the houses of tried friends, to be sent for next morning. We would not ask so minute an observance of the customs of Nieuw-Amsterdam, but we plead for the main point, the festival, with the hearty, social feeling that gives value to it. This may be unfashionable in some quarters, but it is human, and gives occasion for one of the too few recognitions of a common nature and a common interest. But, strange power of fancy! here we are

carried back to all the bustle and excitement of a New-Year's day in the city. What a contrast to the realities around us! This bright, soft-singing wood fire, crackling occasionally with that mysterious sound which the good vrouws call "treading snow," and which they hold to foretell sleighing; the cat coiled up cozily on the hearth-rug, fast asleep; even the sounds which but just reach the ear when the ground is dry and bare, now hushed by the thick covering of snow out of doors; now and then a low, black sled moving silently along the road; and still more seldom a solitary foot-passenger, with his rifle or his axe on his shoulder; how can we imagine to ourselves the thronging crowds that make the very stones resound under the thousand vehicles and quick trampling feet in the great thoroughfares? Not Imagination but Memory lends her aid in this instance; Memory, never more faithful than when she recalls to the emigrant the home-scenes of former days. Yet we ought hardly to call her faithful, for she always reverses rules in her pictures, placing her brightest tints in the back-ground. Brilliant lights, with only shadow enough to bring them out, characterize her distant views, and this is no true perspective, though we are prone to put faith in it. We must not use such views for *studies*.

Far removed from all the pleasurable associations of this period, we too hail the New Year, but not with the old feeling. We wish each other a "happy new year" as usual, but there is a touch of sadness in our greeting. Our new homes have not yet the warmth of the old; there is a chill hanging about them still, especially at these seasons when we recall the warm grasp of early friends. The young only are thoroughly gay here. They dwell not on the past; they trouble not their heads about the future. They have an ever-welling fount of happiness within; while we, their elders, are compelled to dig deep, and sometimes even then strike no vein. To them, sport in the wilds is as good as sport any where else. They skate, they slide, they run races; they take the hill-side with their rough, home-made sleds, and they ask nothing better. This for the younger scions. Those a step more advanced, get up shooting-matches, or dancing-matches; pleasure on a more dignified scale. We will not describe that vile form of the shooting-match, wherein a poor turkey is tied to

a post, to be mangled in cold blood by the boobies of the neighbourhood; those who never fired a shot in their lives taking the lead; as when a number of lawyers are to speak on the same side, those who are not expected to hit at all are placed first. This is a cruel, unmanly, un-western sport, and should be scorned by the forester. He has been driven to it by the unnatural lack of all decent and proper amusement. The true shooting-match, when conducted on the large scale, affords famous sport. Two parties, matched and balanced as nearly as may be in skill and numbers, and each commanded by a leader chosen on account of his general qualifications, social as well as sporting, set out at break of day, in different directions; it makes but little difference which way, since game is plenty at all points. A time and place of rendezvous are appointed, and certain kinds of game prescribed as within the rules; and each party, collectively or severally, as circumstances may require, makes as wide a search as time will allow, and brings down as many deer, partridges, quails, etc., as possible; horses being in attendance to bear home the fortune of the day. At the place appointed the whole is examined, counted and judged, according to the rules and rates agreed on, and umpires then award the palm of victory. "To the victors belong the spoils" of course; so the vanquished furnish the evening's entertainment, except that the game is common property. This makes no contemptible New Year's day for the young men; and choice game is not despised as the substantial part of the supper which succeeds or rather divides what we mentioned awhile ago —a dancing-match.

This, we should think, must be more laborious even than the shooting-match; at least it is more like steady, serious, unremitting work. Two in the afternoon is not too soon to begin, nor six in the morning too late to finish. Now if this be not a trial of strength, what is? It proves so; for only the most resolute hold out through the whole time. Even they would doubtless flag were it not for the supper at which we have hinted above, of which (to their honour be it spoken) our rustic damsels are not too affected to be willing to partake with good will and without mincing. They dance "the old year out and the new year in," sometimes; but usually the ball closes the sports of New-Year's

day, and you may see them as the sun is rising on the second day of the year, sleigh-load after sleigh-load, going home as merry as larks, under the care of their stout beaux, not half so tired as a city belle is after walking through a cotillon.

Sometimes the snow is so fine that a grand sleigh-ride takes the place of the grand hunt on this day. As many as possible are engaged, and they go off some fifteen or twenty or thirty miles, with as many strings of bells as can be raised for the occasion, and have an impromptu supper and dance, and return home by moonlight. One indispensable condition of such a party is an exact pairing—an Adam and Eve division of the company; so that if a single nymph or swain be missing before the day arrives, and no one is found to supply the vacancy, the counterpart shares the misfortune, and remains at home. We have known companies where an approach to this rule—a belle to every beau—would have been convenient, and saved some sour looks. Here it is all in good faith, and the appropriation very strict, for the time being; and particular attention or graciousness to more than one of the party is contrary to etiquette. The pairs speak of each other as "my mate," with all the gravity imaginable.

After all, these are the people who taste the true sweets of pleasure, strictly so called. They enjoy themselves freely and heartily, caring nothing for what those very dignified and rather dull people who call themselves "the world" may think of their dress or their dancing. It would not give them a moment's concern to be told that people a hundred miles off thought them half savages. And nothing would be so odious to them as the ceremony, the constraint, the clatter, and the stupidity of many an unmeaning fashionable party. They would hardly believe you if you should tell them that people really do get together at great cost and trouble to look at each other's dresses and a decorated supper-table, and go home again. "What! no music! no dancing! no nothing! Awful! I'd ruther spin wool all day!"

To those of us who have done with all these things; whose "dancing days are over," and who are studying the difficult art of "growing old gracefully," the coming of another year brings reflection, if not sadness. "What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!" Who can stand upon the verge of another

era, without emotion? Who does not feel, as this change passes before him, something of the awe that thrilled the veins of him who saw "an image" but "could not discern the form thereof?" How little can we guess of this turning leaf in our destiny! If the heart be light, we read on the dim scroll words of soft and sweet promise, traced by the ready fingers of Hope. If there be a cloud on the spirit, we can discern only characters gloomy as any that remain of memory's writing; while perhaps that Eye from which nothing is hidden, sees Death sweeping with his dark wing all that fond imagination had presented to our view, leaving our part in this life's future, one chill blank. Blessed be God that our eyes are "holden!" To HIM who has controlled the past in love and mercy, we may safely commit the future.

THE SCHOOLMASTER'S PROGRESS.

MASTER WILLIAM HORNER came to our village to keep school when he was about eighteen years old: tall, lank, straight-sided, and straight-haired, with a mouth of the most puckered and solemn kind. His figure and movements were those of a puppet cut out of shingle and jerked by a string; and his address corresponded very well with his appearance. Never did that prim mouth give way before a laugh. A faint and misty smile was the widest departure from its propriety, and this unaccustomed disturbance made wrinkles in the flat skinny cheeks like those in the surface of a lake, after the intrusion of a stone. Master Horner knew well what belonged to the pedagogical character, and that facial solemnity stood high on the list of indispensable qualifications. He had made up his mind before he left his father's house how he would look during the term. He had not planned any smiles, (knowing that he must "board round"), and it was not for ordinary occurrences to alter his arrangements; so that when he was betrayed into a relaxation of the muscles, it was "in such a sort" as if he was putting his bread and butter in jeopardy.

Truly he had a grave time that first winter. The rod of power was new to him, and he felt it his "duty" to use it more frequently than might have been thought necessary by those upon whose sense the privilege had palled. Tears and sulky faces, and impotent fists doubled fiercely when his back was turned, were the rewards of his conscientiousness; and the boys—and girls too—were glad when working time came round again, and the master went home to help his father on the farm.

But with the autumn came Master Horner again, dropping among us as quietly as the faded leaves, and awakening at least

as much serious reflection. Would he be as self-sacrificing as before, postponing his own ease and comfort to the public good? or would he have become more sedentary, and less fond of circumambulating the school-room with a switch over his shoulder? Many were fain to hope he might have learned to smoke during the summer, an accomplishment which would probably have moderated his energy not a little, and disposed him rather to reverie than to action. But here he was, and all the broader-chested and stouter-armed for his labours in the harvest-field.

Let it not be supposed that Master Horner was of a cruel and ogrish nature—a babe-eater—a Herod—one who delighted in torturing the helpless. Such souls there may be, among those endowed with the awful control of the ferule, but they are rare in the fresh and natural regions we describe. It is, we believe, where young gentlemen are to be crammed for college, that the process of hardening heart and skin together goes on most vigorously. Yet among the uneducated there is so high a respect for bodily strength, that it is necessary for the schoolmaster to show, first of all, that he possesses this inamissible requisite for his place. The rest is more readily taken for granted. Brains he *may* have —a strong arm he *must* have: so he proves the more important claim first. We must therefore make all due allowance for Master Horner, who could not be expected to overtop his position so far as to discern at once the philosophy of teaching.

He was sadly brow-beaten during his first term of service by a great broad-shouldered lout of some eighteen years or so, who thought he needed a little more "schooling," but at the same time felt quite competent to direct the manner and measure of his attempts.

"You'd ought to begin with large-hand, Joshuay," said Master Horner to this youth.

"What should I want coarse-hand for?" said the disciple, with great contempt; "coarse-hand won't never do me no good. I want a fine-hand copy."

The master looked at the infant giant, and did as he wished, but we say not with what secret resolutions.

At another time, Master Horner, having had a hint from some one more knowing than himself, proposed to his elder scholars to

write after dictation, expatiating at the same time quite floridly, (the ideas having been supplied by the knowing friend,) upon the advantages likely to arise from this practice, and saying, among other things,

"It will help you, when you write letters, to spell the words good."

"Pooh!" said Joshua, "spellin' ain't nothin'; let them that finds the mistakes correct 'em. I'm for every one's havin' a way of their own."*

"How dared you be so saucy to the master?" asked one of the little boys, after school.

"Because I could lick him, easy," said the hopeful Joshua, who knew very well why the master did not undertake him on the spot.

Can we wonder that Master Horner determined to make his empire good as far as it went?

A new examination was required on the entrance into a second term, and, with whatever secret trepidation, the master was obliged to submit. Our law prescribes examinations, but forgets to provide for the competency of the examiners; so that few better farces offer, than the course of question and answer on these occasions. We know not precisely what were Master Horner's trials; but we have heard of a sharp dispute between the inspectors whether a n g e l spelt *angle* or *angel*. *Angle* had it, and the school maintained that pronunciation ever after. Master Horner passed, and he was requested to draw up the certificate for the inspectors to sign, as one had left his spectacles at home, and the other had a bad cold, so that it was not convenient for either to write more than his name. Master Horner's exhibition of learning on this occasion did not reach us, but we know that it must have been considerable, since he stood the ordeal.

"What is Orthography?" said an inspecter once, in our presence.

The candidate writhed a good deal, studied the beams overhead and the chickens out of the window, and then replied,

"It is so long since I learnt the first part of the spelling-book,

* Verbatim.

that I can't justly answer that question. But if I could just look it over, I guess I could."

Our schoolmaster entered upon his second term with new courage and invigorated authority. Twice certified, who should dare doubt his competency? Even Joshua was civil, and lesser louts of course obsequious; though the girls took more liberties; for they feel even at that early age, that influence is stronger than strength.

Could a young schoolmaster think of feruling a girl with her hair in ringlets and a gold ring on her finger? Impossible—and the immunity extended to all the little sisters and cousins; and there were enough large girls to protect all the feminine part of the school. With the boys Master Horner still had many a battle, and whether with a view to this, or as an economical *ruse*, he never wore his coat in school, saying it was too warm. Perhaps it was an astute attention to the prejudices of his employers, who love no man that does not earn his living by the sweat of his brow. The shirt-sleeves gave the idea of a manual-labour school in one sense at least. It was evident that the master worked, and that afforded a probability that the scholars worked too.

Master Horner's success was most triumphant that winter. A year's growth had improved his outward man exceedingly, filling out the limbs so that they did not remind you so forcibly of a young colt's, and supplying the cheeks with the flesh and blood so necessary where moustaches were not worn. Experience had given him a degree of confidence, and confidence gave him power. In short, people said the master had waked up; and so he had. He actually set about reading for improvement; and although at the end of the term he could not quite make out from his historical studies which side Hannibal was on, yet this is readily explained by the fact that he boarded round, and was obliged to read generally by firelight, surrounded by ungoverned children.

After this, Master Horner made his own bargain. When school-time came round with the following autumn, and the teacher presented himself for a third examination, such a test was pronounced no longer necessary; and the district consented to en-

gage him at the astounding rate of sixteen dollars a month, with the understanding that he was to have a fixed home, provided he was willing to allow a dollar a week for it. Master Horner bethought him of the successive "killing-times," and consequent dough-nuts of the twenty families in which he had sojourned the years before, and consented to the exaction.

Behold our friend now as high as district teacher can ever hope to be—his scholarship established, his home stationary and not revolving, and the good behaviour of the community insured by the fact that he, being of age, had now a farm to retire upon in case of any disgust.

Master Horner was at once the pre-eminent beau of the neighbourhood, spite of the prejudice against learning. He brushed his hair straight up in front, and wore a sky-blue riband for a guard to his silver watch, and walked as if the tall heels of his blunt boots were egg-shells and not leather. Yet he was far from neglecting the duties of his place. He was beau only on Sundays and holidays; very schoolmaster the rest of the time.

It was at a "spelling-school" that Master Horner first met the educated eyes of Miss Harriet Bangle, a young lady visiting the Engleharts in our neighbourhood. She was from one of the towns in Western New York, and had brought with her a variety of city airs and graces somewhat caricatured, set off with year-old French fashions much travestied. Whether she had been sent out to the new country to try, somewhat late, a rustic chance for an establishment, or whether her company had been found rather trying at home, we cannot say. The view which she was at some pains to make understood was, that her friends had contrived this method of keeping her out of the way of a desperate lover whose addresses were not acceptable to them.

If it should seem surprising that so high-bred a visiter should be sojourning in the wild woods, it must be remembered that more than one celebrated Englishman and not a few distinguished Americans have farmer brothers in the western country, no whit less rustic in their exterior and manner of life than the plainest of their neighbours. When these are visited by their refined kinsfolk, we of the woods catch glimpses of the gay world, or think we do.

"That great medicine hath
With its tinct gilded—"

many a vulgarism to the satisfaction of wiser heads than ours.

Miss Bangle's manner bespoke for her that high consideration which she felt to be her due. Yet she condescended to be amused by the rustics and their awkward attempts at gaiety and elegance; and, to say truth, few of the village merry-makings escaped her, though she wore always the air of great superiority.

The spelling-school is one of the ordinary winter amusements in the country. It occurs once in a fortnight, or so, and has power to draw out all the young people for miles round, arrayed in their best clothes and their holiday behaviour. When all is ready, umpires are elected, and after these have taken the distinguished place usually occupied by the teacher, the young people of the school choose the two best scholars to head the opposing classes. These leaders choose their followers from the mass, each calling a name in turn, until all the spellers are ranked on one side or the other, lining the sides of the room, and all standing. The schoolmaster, standing too, takes his spelling-book, and gives a placid yet awe-inspiring look along the ranks, remarking that he intends to be very impartial, and that he shall give out nothing *that is not in the spelling-book*. For the first half hour or so he chooses common and easy words, that the spirit of the evening may not be damped by the too early thinning of the classes. When a word is missed, the blunderer has to sit down, and be a spectator only for the rest of the evening. At certain intervals, some of the best speakers mount the platform, and "speak a piece," which is generally as declamatory as possible.

The excitement of this scene is equal to that afforded by any city spectacle whatever; and towards the close of the evening, when difficult and unusual words are chosen to confound the small number who still keep the floor, it becomes scarcely less than painful. When perhaps only one or two remain to be puzzled, the master, weary at last of his task, though a favourite one, tries by tricks to put down those whom he cannot overcome in fair fight. If among all the curious, useless, unheard-of words which may be picked out of the spelling-book, he cannot find one which the scholars have not noticed, he gets the last head

down by some quip or catch. "Bay" will perhaps be the sound; one scholar spells it "bey," another, "bay," while the master all the time means "ba," which comes within the rule, being *in the spelling-book.*

It was on one of these occasions, as we have said, that Miss Bangle, having come to the spelling-school to get materials for a letter to a female friend, first shone upon Mr. Horner. She was excessively amused by his solemn air and puckered mouth, and set him down at once as fair game. Yet she could not help becoming somewhat interested in the spelling-school, and after it was over found she had not stored up half as many of the schoolmaster's points as she intended, for the benefit of her correspondent.

In the evening's contest a young girl from some few miles' distance, Ellen Kingsbury, the only child of a substantial farmer, had been the very last to sit down, after a prolonged effort on the part of Mr. Horner to puzzle her, for the credit of his own school. She blushed, and smiled, and blushed again, but spelt on, until Mr. Horner's cheeks were crimson with excitement and some touch of shame that he should be baffled at his own weapons. At length, either by accident or design, Ellen missed a word, and sinking into her seat, was numbered with the slain.

In the laugh and talk which followed, (for with the conclusion of the spelling, all form of a public assembly vanishes,) our schoolmaster said so many gallant things to his fair enemy, and appeared so much animated by the excitement of the contest, that Miss Bangle began to look upon him with rather more respect, and to feel somewhat indignant that a little rustic like Ellen should absorb the entire attention of the only beau. She put on, therefore, her most gracious aspect, and mingled in the circle; caused the schoolmaster to be presented to her, and did her best to fascinate him by certain airs and graces which she had found successful elsewhere. What game is too small for the close-woven net of a coquette?

Mr. Horner quitted not the fair Ellen until he had handed her into her father's sleigh; and he then wended his way homewards, never thinking that he ought to have escorted Miss Bangle to her uncle's, though she certainly waited a little while for his return.

We must not follow into particulars the subsequent intercourse of our schoolmaster with the civilized young lady. All that concerns us is the result of Miss Bangle's benevolent designs upon his heart. She tried most sincerely to find its vulnerable spot, meaning no doubt to put Mr. Horner on his guard for the future; and she was unfeignedly surprised to discover that her best efforts were of no avail. She concluded he must have taken a counter-poison, and she was not slow in guessing its source. She had observed the peculiar fire which lighted up his eyes in the presence of Ellen Kingsbury, and she bethought her of a plan which would ensure her some amusement at the expense of these impertinent rustics, though in a manner different somewhat from her original more natural idea of simple coquetry.

A letter was written to Master Horner, purporting to come from Ellen Kingsbury, worded so artfully that the schoolmaster understood at once that it was intended to be a secret communication, though its otensible object was an inquiry about some ordinary affair. This was laid in Mr. Horner's desk before he came to school, with an intimation that he might leave an answer in a certain spot on the following morning. The bait took at once, for Mr. Horner, honest and true himself, and much smitten with the fair Ellen, was too happy to be circumspect. The answer was duly placed, and as duly carried to Miss Bangle by her accomplice Joe Englehart, an unlucky pickle who "was always for ill, never for good," and who found no difficulty in obtaining the letter unwatched, since the master was obliged to be in school at nine, and Joe could always linger a few minutes later. This answer being opened and laughed at, Miss Bangle had only to contrive a rejoinder, which being rather more particular in its tone than the original communication, led on yet again the happy schoolmaster, who branched out into sentiment, "taffeta phrases, silken terms precise," talked of hills and dales and rivulets, and the pleasures of friendship, and concluded by entreating a continuance of the correspondence.

Another letter and another, every one more flattering and encouraging than the last, almost turned the sober head of our poor master, and warmed up his heart so effectually that he could scarcely attend to his business. The spelling-schools were re-

membered however, and Ellen Kingsbury made one of the merry company; but the latest letter had not forgotten to caution Mr. Horner not to betray the intimacy, so that he was in honour bound to restrict himself to the language of the eyes, hard as it was to forbear the single whisper for which he would have given his very dictionary. So their meeting passed off without the explanation which Miss Bangle began to fear would cut short her benevolent amusement.

The correspondence was resumed with renewed spirit, and carried on until Miss Bangle, though not over-burdened with sensitiveness, began to be a little alarmed for the consequences of her malicious pleasantry. She perceived that she herself had turned schoolmistress, and that Master Horner, instead of being merely her dupe, had become her pupil too; for the style of his replies had been constantly improving, and the earnest and manly tone which he assumed promised any thing but the quiet, sheepish pocketing of injury and insult, upon which she had counted. In truth, there was something deeper than vanity in the feelings with which he regarded Ellen Kingsbury. The encouragement which he supposed himself to have received, threw down the barrier which his extreme bashfulness would have interposed between himself and any one who possessed charms enough to attract him; and we must excuse him if, in such a case, he did not criticise the mode of encouragement, but rather grasped eagerly the proffered good without a scruple, or one which he would own to himself, as to the propriety with which it was tendered. He was as much in love as a man can be, and the seriousness of real attachment gave both grace and dignity to his once awkward diction.

The evident determination of Mr. Horner to come to the point of asking papa, brought Miss Bangle to a very awkward pass. She had expected to return home before matters had proceeded so far, but being obliged to remain some time longer, she was equally afraid to go on and to leave off, a denouement being almost certain to ensue in either case. Things stood thus when it was time to prepare for the grand exhibition which was to close the winter's term.

This is an affair of too much magnitude to be fully described

in the small space yet remaining in which to bring out our veracious history. It must be "slubber'd o'er in haste,"—its important preliminaries left to the cold imagination of the reader—its fine spirit perhaps evaporating for want of being embodied in words. We can only say that our master, whose school-life was to close with the term, laboured as man never before laboured in such a cause, resolute to trail a cloud of glory after him when he left us. Not a candlestick nor a curtain that was attainable, either by coaxing or bribery, was left in the village; even the only piano, that frail treasure, was wiled away and placed in one corner of the rickety stage. The most splendid of all the pieces in the "Columbian Orator," the "American Speaker," the——but we must not enumerate—in a word, the most astounding and pathetic specimens of eloquence within ken of either teacher or scholars, had been selected for the occasion; and several young ladies and gentlemen, whose academical course had been happily concluded at an earlier period, either at our own institution or at some other, had consented to lend themselves to the parts and their choicest decorations for the properties, of the dramatic portion of the entertainment.

Among these last was pretty Ellen Kingsbury, who had agreed te personate the Queen of Scots, in the garden scene from Schiller's tragedy of "Mary Stuart;" and this circumstance accidentally afforded Master Horner the opportunity he had so long desired, of seeing his fascinating correspondent without the presence of peering eyes. A dress-rehearsal occupied the afternoon before the day of days, and the pathetic expostulations of the lovely Mary—

> Mine all doth hang—my life—my destiny—
> Upon my words—upon the force of tears!—

aided by the long veil, and the emotion which sympathy brought into Ellen's countenance, proved too much for the enforced prudence of Master Horner. When the rehearsal was over, and the heroes and heroines were to return home, it was found that, by a stroke of witty invention not new in the country, the harness of Mr. Kingsbury's horses had been cut in several places, his whip hidden, his buffalo-skins spread on the ground, and the sleigh

turned bottom upwards on them. This afforded an excuse for the master's borrowing a horse and sleigh of somebody, and claiming the privilege of taking Miss Ellen home, while her father returned with only Aunt Sally and a great bag of bran from the mill—companions about equally interesting.

Here, then, was the golden opportunity so long wished for! Here was the power of ascertaining at once what is never quite certain until we have heard it from warm, living lips, whose testimony is strengthened by glances in which the whole soul speaks or—seems to speak. The time was short, for the sleighing was but too fine; and Father Kingsbury, having tied up his harness, and collected his scattered equipment, was driving so close behind that there was no possibility of lingering for a moment. Yet many moments were lost before Mr. Horner, very much in earnest, and all unhackneyed in matters of this sort, could find a word in which to clothe his new-found feelings. The horse seemed to fly—the distance was half past—and at length, in absolute despair of anything better, he blurted out at once what he had determined to avoid—a direct reference to the correspondence.

A game at cross-purposes ensued; exclamations and explanations, and denials and apologies filled up the time which was to have made Master Horner so blest. The light from Mr. Kingsbury's windows shone upon the path, and the whole result of this conference so longed for, was a burst of tears from the perplexed and mortified Ellen, who sprang from Mr. Horner's attempts to detain her, rushed into the house without vouchsafing him a word of adieu, and left him standing, no bad personification of Orpheus, after the last hopeless flitting of his Eurydice.

"Won't you 'light, Master?" said Mr. Kingsbury.

"Yes—no—thank you—good evening," stammered poor Master Horner, so stupified that even Aunt Sally called him "a dummy."

The horse took the sleigh against the fence, going home, and threw out the master, who scarcely recollected the accident; while to Ellen the issue of this unfortunate drive was a sleepless night and so high a fever in the morning that our village doctor was called to Mr. Kingsbury's before breakfast.

Poor Master Horner's distress may hardly be imagined. Disappointed, bewildered, cut to the quick, yet as much in love as ever, he could only in bitter silence turn over in his thoughts the issue of his cherished dream; now persuading himself that Ellen's denial was the effect of a sudden bashfulness, now inveighing against the fickleness of the sex, as all men do when they are angry with any one woman in particular. But his exhibition must go on in spite of wretchedness; and he went about mechanically, talking of curtains and candles, and music, and attitudes, and pauses, and emphasis, looking like a somnambulist whose "eyes are open but their sense is shut," and often surprising those concerned by the utter unfitness of his answers.

It was almost evening when Mr. Kingsbury, having discovered, through the intervention of the Doctor and Aunt Sally the cause of Ellen's distress, made his appearance before the unhappy eyes of Master Horner, angry, solemn and determined; taking the schoolmaster apart, and requiring an explanation of his treatment of his daughter. In vain did the perplexed lover ask for time to clear himself, declare his respect for Miss Ellen and his willingness to give every explanation which she might require: the father was not to be put off; and though excessively reluctant, Mr. Horner had no resource but to show the letters which alone could account for his strange discourse to Ellen. He unlocked his desk, slowly and unwillingly, while the old man's impatience was such that he could scarcely forbear thrusting in his own hand to snatch at the papers which were to explain this vexatious mystery. What could equal the utter confusion of Master Horner and the contemptuous anger of the father, when no letters were to be found! Mr. Kingsbury was too passionate to listen to reason, or to reflect for one moment upon the irreproachable good name of the schoolmaster. He went away in inexorable wrath; threatening every practicable visitation of public and private justice upon the head of the offender, whom he accused of having attempted to trick his daughter into an entanglement which should result in his favour.

A doleful exhibition was this last one of our thrice-approved and most worthy teacher! Stern necessity and the power of habit enabled him to go through with most of his part, but where

was the proud fire which had lighted up his eye on similar occasions before? He sat as one of three judges before whom the unfortunate Robert Emmet was dragged in his shirt-sleeves, by two fierce-looking officials; but the chief judge looked far more like a criminal than did the proper representative. He ought to have personated Othello, but was obliged to excuse himself from raving for "the handkerchief! the handkerchief!" on the rather anomalous plea of a bad cold. "Mary Stuart" being "i' the bond," was anxiously expected by the impatient crowd, and it was with distress amounting to agony that the master was obliged to announce, in person, the necessity of omitting that part of the representation, on account of the illness of one of the young ladies.

Scarcely had the words been uttered, and the speaker hidden his burning face behind the curtain, when Mr. Kingsbury started up in his place amid the throng, to give a public recital of his grievance—no uncommon resort in the new country. He dashed at once to the point; and before some friends who saw the utter impropriety of his proceeding could persuade him to defer his vengeance, he had laid before the assembly—some three hundred people, perhaps—his own statement of the case. He was got out at last, half coaxed, half hustled; and the gentle public only half understanding what had been set forth thus unexpectedly, made quite a pretty row of it. Some clamoured loudly for the conclusion of the exercises; others gave utterance in no particularly choice terms to a variety of opinions as to the schoolmaster's proceedings, varying the note occasionally by shouting, "the letters! the letters! why don't you bring out the letters?"

At length, by means of much rapping on the desk by the president of the evening, who was fortunately a "popular" character, order was partially restored; and the favourite scene from Miss More's dialogue of David and Goliah was announced as the closing piece. The sight of little David in a white tunic edged with red tape, with a calico scrip and a very primitive-looking sling; and a huge Goliah decorated with a militia belt and sword, and a spear like a weaver's beam indeed, enchained every body's attention. Even the peccant schoolmaster and his pretended letters were forgotten, while the sapient Goliah, every time that he rais-

ed the spear, in the energy of his declamation, to thump upon the stage, picked away fragments of the low ceiling, which fell conspicuously on his great shock of black hair. At last, with the crowning threat, up went the spear for an astounding thump, and down came a large piece of the ceiling, and with it—a shower of letters.

The confusion that ensued beggars all description. A general scramble took place, and in another moment twenty pairs of eyes, at least, were feasting on the choice phrases lavished upon Mr. Horner. Miss Bangle had sat through the whole previous scene, trembling for herself, although she had, as she supposed, guarded cunningly against exposure. She had needed no prophet to tell her what must be the result of a tête-à-tête between Mr. Horner and Ellen; and the moment she saw them drive off together, she induced her imp to seize the opportunity of abstracting the whole parcel of letters from Mr. Horner's desk; which he did by means of a sort of skill which comes by nature to such goblins; picking the lock by the aid of a crooked nail, as neatly as if he had been born within the shadow of the Tombs.

But magicians sometimes suffer severely from the malice with which they have themselves inspired their familiars. Joe Englehart having been a convenient tool thus far, thought it quite time to torment Miss Bangle a little; so, having stolen the letters at her bidding, he hid them on his own account, and no persuasions of hers could induce him to reveal this important secret, which he chose to reserve as a rod in case she refused him some intercession with his father, or some other accommodation, rendered necessary by his mischievous habits.

He had concealed the precious parcel in the unfloored loft above the school-room, a place accessible only by means of a small trap-door without staircase or ladder; and here he meant to have kept them while it suited his purposes, but for the untimely intrusion of the weaver's beam.

Miss Bangle had sat through all, as we have said, thinking the letters safe, yet vowing vengeance against her confederate for not allowing her to secure them by a satisfactory conflagration; and it was not until she heard her own name whispered through the crowd, that she was awakened to her true situation. The sagacity

of the low creatures whom she had despised showed them at once that the letters must be hers, since her character had been pretty shrewdly guessed, and the handwriting wore a more practised air than is usual among females in the country. This was first taken for granted, and then spoken of as an acknowledged fact.

The assembly moved like the heavings of a troubled sea. Every body felt that this was every body's business. "Put her out!" was heard from more than one rough voice near the door, and this was responded to by loud and angry murmurs from within.

Mr. Englehart, not waiting to inquire into the merits of the case in this scene of confusion, hastened to get his family out as quietly and as quickly as possible, but groans and hisses followed his niece as she hung half-fainting on his arm, quailing completely beneath the instinctive indignation of the rustic public. As she passed out, a yell resounded among the rude boys about the door, and she was lifted into a sleigh, insensible from terror. She disappeared from that evening, and no one knew the time of her final departure for "the east."

Mr. Kingsbury, who is a just man when he is not in a passion, made all the reparation in his power for his harsh and ill-considered attack upon the master; and we believe that functionary did not show any traits of implacability of character. At least he was seen, not many days after, sitting peaceably at tea with Mr. Kingsbury, Aunt Sally, and Miss Ellen; and he has since gone home to build a house upon his farm. And people *do* say, that after a few months more, Ellen will not need Miss Bangle's intervention if she should see fit to correspond with the umquhile schoolmaster.

HALF-LENGTHS FROM LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

OPERATIVE DEMOCRACY.

"A theme of perilous risk
Thou handlest, and hot fires beneath thy path
The treacherous ashes nurse."

"CAN'T you let our folks have some eggs?" said Daniel Webster Larkins, opening the door, and putting in a litttle straw-coloured head and a pair of very mild blue eyes just far enough to reconnoitre; "can't you let our folks have some eggs? Our old hen don't lay nothing but chickens now, and mother can't eat pork, and she a'n't had no breakfast, and the baby a'n't drest, nor nothin'!"

"What is the matter, Webster? Where's your girl?"

"Oh! we ha'n't no girl but father, and he's had to go 'way today to a raisin'—and mother wants to know if you can't tell her where to get a girl?"

Poor Mrs. Larkins! Her husband makes but an indifferent "girl," being a remarkable public-spirited person. The good lady is in very delicate health, and having an incredible number of little blue eyes constantly making fresh demands upon her time and strength, she usually keeps a girl when she can get one. When she cannot, which is unfortunately the larger part of the time, her husband dresses the children—mixes stir-cakes for the eldest blue eyes to bake on a griddle, which is never at rest—milks the cow—feeds the pigs—and then goes to his "business," which we have supposed to consist principally in helping at raisings, wood-bees, huskings, and such like important affairs; and

"girl" hunting—the most important and arduous, and profitless of all.

Yet it must be owned that Mr. Larkins is a tolerable carpenter, and that he buys as many comforts for his family as most of his neighbours. The main difficulty seems to be that "help" is not often purchasable. The very small portion of our damsels who will consent to enter anybody's doors for pay, makes the chase after them quite interesting from its uncertainty; and the damsels themselves, subject to a well known foible of their sex, become very coy from being over-courted. Such racing and chasing, and begging and praying, to get a girl for a month! They are often got for life with half the trouble. But to return.

Having an esteem for Mrs. Larkins, and a sincere experimental pity for the forlorn condition of "no girl but father," I set out at once to try if female tact and perseverance might not prove effectual in ferreting out a "help," though mere industry had not succeeded. For this purpose I made a list in my mind of those neighbours, in the first place, whose daughters sometimes condescended to be girls; and, secondly, of the few who were enabled by good luck, good management, and good pay, to keep them. If I failed in my attempts upon one class, I hoped for somenew lights from the other. When the object is of such importance, it is well to string one's bow double.

In the first category stood Mrs. Lowndes, whose forlorn loghouse had never known door or window; a blanket supplying the place of the one, and the other being represented by a crevice between the logs. Lifting the sooty curtain with some timidity, I found the dame with a sort of reel before her, trying to wind some dirty, tangled yarn; and ever and anon kicking at a basket which hung suspended from the beam overhead by means of a strip of hickory bark. This basket contained a nest of rags and an indescribable baby; and in the ashes on the rough hearth played several dingy objects, which I suppose had once been babies.

"Is your daughter at home now, Mrs. Lowndes?"

"Well, yes! M'randy's to hum, but she's out now. Did you want her?"

"I came to see if she could go to Mrs. Larkins, who is very unwell, and sadly in want of help."

"Miss Larkins! why, do tell! I want to know! Is she sick agin? and is her gal gone? Why! I want to know! I thought she had Lo-i-sy Paddon! Is Lo-i-sy gone?"

"I suppose so. You will let Miranda go to Mrs. Larkins, will you?"

"Well, I donnow but I would let her go for a spell, just to 'commodate 'em. M'randy may go if she's a mind ter. She needn't live out unless she chooses. She's got a comfortable home, and no thanks to nobody. What wages do they give?"

"A dollar a week."

"Eat at the table?"

"Oh! certainly."

"Have Sundays?"

"Why no—I believe not the whole of Sunday—the children, you know—"

"Oh ho!" interrupted Mrs. Lowndes, with a most disdainful toss of the head, giving at the same time a vigorous impulse to the cradle, "if that's how it is, M'randy don't stir a step! She don't live nowhere if she can't come home Saturday night and stay till Monday morning."

I took my leave without farther parley, having often found this point the *sine qua non* in such negotiations.

My next effort was at a pretty-looking cottage, whose overhanging roof and neat outer arrangements, spoke of English ownership. The interior by no means corresponded with the exterior aspect, being even more bare than usual, and far from neat. The presiding power was a prodigious creature, who looked like a man in woman's clothes, and whose blazing face, ornamented here and there by great hair moles, spoke very intelligibly of the beer-barrel, if of nothing more exciting. A daughter of this virago had once lived in my family, and the mother met me with an air of defiance, as if she thought I had come with an accusation. When I unfolded my errand, her *abord* softened a little, but she scornfully rejected the idea of her Lucy living with any more Yankees.

"You pretend to think everybody alike," said she, "but when

it comes to the pint, you're a sight more uppish and saucy than the ra'al quality at home; and I'll see the whole Yankee race to ——"

I made my exit without waiting for the conclusion of this complimentary observation; and the less reluctantly for having observed on the table the lower part of one of my silver teaspoons, the top of which had been violently wrenched off. This spoon was a well-remembered loss during Lucy's administration, and I knew that Mrs. Larkins had none to spare.

Unsuccessful thus far among the arbiters of our destiny, I thought I would stop at the house of a friend, and make some inquiries which might spare me farther rebuffs. On making my way by the garden gate to the little library where I usually saw Mrs. Stayner, I was surprised to find it silent and uninhabited. The windows were closed; a half-finished cap lay on the sofa, and a bunch of yesterday's wild-flowers upon the table. All spoke of desolation. The cradle—not exactly an appropriate adjunct of a library scene elsewhere, but quite so at the West—was gone, and the little rocking-chair was nowhere to be seen. I went on through parlour and hall, finding no sign of life, save the breakfast-table still standing with crumbs undisturbed. Where bells are not known, ceremony is out of the question; so I penetrated even to the kitchen, where at length I caught sight of the fair face of my friend. She was bending over the bread-tray, and at the same time telling nursery-stories as fast as possible, by way of coaxing her little boy of four years old to rock the cradle which contained his baby sister.

"What *does* this mean?"

"Oh! nothing more than usual. My Polly took herself off yesterday without a moment's warning, saying she thought she had lived out about long enough; and poor Tom, our factotum, has the ague. Mr. Stayner has gone to some place sixteen miles off, where he was told he might hear of a girl, and I am sole representative of the family energies. But you've no idea what capital bread I can make."

This looked rather discouraging for my quest; but knowing that the main point of table-companionship was the source of most of Mrs. Stayner's difficulties, I still hoped for Mrs. Larkins,

who loved the closest intimacy with her "help," and always took them visiting with her. So I passed on for another effort at Mrs. Randall's, whose three daughters had sometimes been known to lay aside their dignity long enough to obtain some much-coveted article of dress. Here the mop was in full play; and Mrs. Randall, with her gown turned up, was splashing diluted mud on the walls and furniture, in the received mode of these regions, where "stained-glass windows" are made without a patent. I did not venture in, but asked from the door, with my best diplomacy, whether Mrs. Randall *knew* of a girl.

"A gal! no; who wants a gal?"

"Mrs. Larkins."

"She! why don't she get up and do her own work?"

"She is too feeble."

"Law sakes! too feeble! she'd be able as anybody to thrash round, if her old man didn't spile her by waitin' on——"

We think Mrs. Larkins deserves small blame on this score.

"But, Mrs. Randall, the poor woman is really ill and unable to do anything for her children. Couldn't you spare Rachel for a few days to help her?"

This was said in a most guarded and deprecatory tone, and with a manner carefully moulded between indifference and undue solicitude.

"My gals has got enough to do. They a'n't able to do their own work. Cur'line hasn't been worth the fust red cent for hard work ever since she went to school to A——."

"Oh! I did not expect to get Caroline. I understand she is going to get married."

"What! to Bill Green! She wouldn't let him walk where she walked last year!"

Here I saw I had made a misstep. Resolving to be more cautious, I left the selection to the lady herself, and only begged for one of the girls. But my eloquence was wasted. The Miss Randalls had been a whole quarter at a select school, and will not live out again until their present stock of finery is unwearable. Miss Rachel, whose company I had hoped to secure, was even then paying attention to a branch of the fine arts.

"Rachel Amandy!" cried Mrs. Randall at the foot of the lad-

der which gave access to the upper regions—" fetch that thing down here! It's the prettiest thing you ever see in your life!" turning to me. And the educated young lady brought down a doleful-looking compound of card-board and many-coloured waters, which had, it seems, occupied her mind and fingers for some days.

" There!" said the mother, proudly, " a gal that's learnt to make sich baskets as that, a'n't a goin' to be nobody's help, I guess!"

I thought the boast likely to be verified as a prediction, and went my way, crestfallen and weary. Girl-hunting is certainly among our most formidable " chores."

CHAPTER II.

INTRODUCTIONS AND REMINISCENCES

"Ah! what avails the largest gifts of heaven
When drooping health and spirits go amiss?
How tasteless then whatever may be given!
Health is the vital principle of bliss,
And exercise of health."

THUS unsuccessful, it was for rest more than for inquiry that I turned my steps toward Mrs. Clifford's modest dwelling—a house containing only just rooms enough for decent comfort, yet inhabited by gentle breeding, and feelings which meet but little sympathy in these rough walks. Mrs. Clifford was a widow, bowed down by misfortune, and gradually sinking into a sort of desperate apathy, if we may be allowed such a term—a condition to which successive disappointments and the gradual fading away of long-cherished hopes, will sometimes reduce proud yet honourable minds. The apathy is on the surface, but the smouldering fires of despair burst forth at intervals, in spite of their icy covering. Exertion had long since been abandoned by this unfortunate lady, and she sat always in her great arm-chair, seeming scarce alive to common things, yet starting in agonized sensitiveness when the tender string of her altered fortunes was touched by a rude hand. This total renunciation of effort had done its work upon her mind and body. Mrs. Clifford had become a mere mountain in size, while her pale face and leaden eye told of anything but health and enjoyment. She read incessantly, seeking that "oblivious antidote" in books, which coarser natures are apt to seek in less refined indulgences. She lived in a world of imagination until she had insensibly become unfit for a world of reality. Who can find anything charming in common life, after a full surrender of the mind to the excitements of fiction? Who ever relished common air after a long draught of exhilarating gas?

To the looker-on, this poor lady, broken down and dispirited as she was, seemed to have much left for which to be grateful. Her two daughters and their manly brother were patterns of duty and devoted affection. Through the whole sad period of the downfall of their fortunes, and the gradual withdrawal, from various causes, of almost the very means of existence, Augustus Clifford shrank from nothing which promised advantage to his mother's condition. While she had yet an income, he was her very efficient and accurate man of business; and when the "misfortunes" of banks, and the assiduity of "defaulters" had made this office a sinecure, he turned his hand to the plough, and was the "patient log-man" of a poverty-stricken household. He had seen with unavailing distress the sad decay of his mother's energies, and done all that a son may, to avert the ill consequences of her indolent habits; but finding matters only growing worse, he had left home at the urgent entreaty of his sisters, a few weeks before the time when our story commences, to seek employment in the city, where abilities like his are so much more in request than in the woods.

Of the two daughters, Rose, the elder, was in feeble health, and, though gentle and unassuming, and much beloved at home, not particularly attractive elsewhere. She was said to have been crossed in love, and her subdued and rather melancholy manner seemed to confirm the report. But Anna Clifford had beauty and grace of a rare order, though in a style not always appreciated by those who admire that fragility of form which is so coveted by our own fair countrywomen. She was taller than most women, but so beautifully proportioned that this would not occur to you until you saw her measured with others. Magnificent is the epithet for her beauty; and much intercourse with polished society had given a free and finished elegance to her manners, while it had detracted nothing from the truth and simplicity of her character. Born to fortune, and having the further advantages of connections high in place, it is not surprising that she should have found many admirers. Indeed we have the satisfaction of knowing that our forest judgment of her charms had been borne out by the homage rendered to our fair neighbour by various young men of acknowledged taste who had bowed at her

shrine in happier days. But it may not be so easy to believe that her heart was still her own. Perhaps the careless gayety of her spirits had proved her shield, since all passion is said to be serious. However this may be, she declared she would not marry till thirty, adding, with the deep determination of twenty-one, and also with the tone which befits the inheritrix of certain prejudices, that then the happy man should be neither a Yankee, a Presbyterian, nor a widower.

We have omitted to mention that these our friends were from England—one forgets that friends are foreigners. Mrs. Clifford, whose income at home had diminished from various causes, was attracted to this country by the far higher interest to be obtained on money; and during some years that she resided in one of the great cities, her expectations of increased income were more than realized, and she and her family had enjoyed all that the best American circles afforded to the wealthy and the accomplished of whatever land. When the dark days came, and Mrs. Clifford found herself left with scarcely a pittance, the "West"—then an El Dorado—offered many attractions to the sanguine mind of Augustus, and he persuaded his mother to withdraw, while yet she might be able to purchase a little land where land is almost given away. What had been the result of this enterprise, we have already seen. Mrs. Clifford was too old to bear transplanting. A high aristocratic pride was the very soul of her being. In the present condition of her circumstances, she felt not only inconvenience—that was unavoidable under a complete revulsion of habits—but degradation; an idea which common sense and self-respect should have scouted. And the very thing that should have made present sacrifices easy, served but to embitter them. The Cliffords had expectations from England, on the demise of some long-lifed uncle or aunt; a fortune, of course, since an English legacy always passes for a fortune, an involuntary compliment, I suppose, to the well-known wealth of our magnificent mother. However, the Cliffords said "expectations," which we will leave to be limited, or unlimited, by the imagination of the reader.

This much by way of introduction—an indispensable ceremony, always attended with some awkwardness. Our present one

has been circumstantial and minute, after the fashion of the country, *e. g.:*

"Miss Wiggins, let me make you acquainted with an uncle of His'n, just come down from Ionia county, the town of Freemantle, village of Breadalbane—come away up here to mill, (they ha'n't no mills yet, up there.) Uncle, this is Miss Wiggins, John Wiggins's wife, up yonder on the hill, t'other side o' the mash—you can see the house from here. She's come down to meetin'."

CHAPTER III.

"THE HARROWS."

In brave poursuitt of honourable deede,
There is I know not what great difference
Between the vulgar and the noble seede—
Which unto things of valorous pretence,
Seem to be borne by native influence.

THIS same introduction has unavoidably called for so many words, that we must hasten over some minor points in the character and situation of our young friends. It would require a long story to express fully the difficulties under which these sweet girls laboured, in trying to soften for their mother a lot which they could cheerfully have endured themselves. Mrs. Clifford's habits were imperative, her prejudices immoveable. All that had yet occurred had failed to make her perceive that it was necessary to do without everything but the bare requisites of subsistence; and to keep this sad necessity from her eyes had been the constant study of her children. She had, indeed, no idea of their efforts and sacrifices, or of the real condition of the household.

"Where is the silver chocolate-pot, Anna?" Mrs. Clifford inquired one morning at breakfast.

"You, know, mamma, the handle was loose, and I took it to the village."

"But what a length of time it has been gone! Pray inquire for it! I do so hate this earthen thing!"

The poor lady would have been without chocolate, and without tea also, if the *chocolatière* had not been transferred, at least *pro. tem.* to the possession of our village dealer-in-all-things. But the idea of such a transaction would almost have crazed her; and she had so far lost the train of cause and effect, that she thought the last bank-note brought in by Augustus had sufficed

for six weeks' family expenses. The girls never gathered courage to enlighten their mother's views as to pecuniary matters, though they were sometimes obliged to run away to hide their tears when she would remark the meanness of their dress, and fear they were contracting habits which would unfit them to enjoy better fortune. Anna Clifford and her sister, forced by suffering to learn a premature prudence, often wished, in the grief of their hearts, that no prospect of an inheritance had prevented their mother from accommodating her ideas to her present condition. This "waiting for dead men's shoes" is proverbially enervating to the character.

When I entered the little parlour, I was somewhat startled by the sight of two rough-looking men, one fanning himself with his hat, the other drumming on the table with his long, black, horny nails, and both taking a deliberate survey of the apartment and all that it contained. In the accustomed chair sat Mrs. Clifford, a purple spot on each cheek, and a look of helpless anger in her eye, while her daughters, one on either side of her, stood, pale as death, gazing on these strange guests.

"Well! I guess we may as well levy, if you've nobody to stay judgment," said the straw hat, who seemed to be principal. "Mr. Grinder told us the money or the things. That's the hang of it. No mistake. Turn out what you like, or we'll take what *we* like. No two ways about it! You ha'n't hid nothing, have ye? If you have, you'd better rowst it out at once't! We've a right to sarch."

Mrs. Clifford gasped for breath.

"Who sent you here?" she said.

"Oh! we're for Grinder. That bill, you know. Your son there confessed judgment. I s'pose he thought levyin' time would never come. We want a hundred dollars, or goods to that amount. You've got a good deal more than the law allows—now what'll you turn out? Come, be lively, gals, for we can't wait!"

This was said quite facetiously.

"Couldn't you grant a little time, till we can hear from my brother?" said Anna, who seemed more self-possessed than her mother or Rose.

"Can't go it! No fun in waitin'. Hearin' from him won't do no good, unless he sends money. Do you expect money?"

"Yes—that is—we hope—"

"Ha! ha! hope starved a rattlesnake! We can't eat nor drink hope. Come, Woodruff, they a'n't a goin' to turn out any thing but talk. Go ahead!"

Our poor friends were overwhelmed, but seeing no present remedy, they could only sit quietly looking on while the officers proceeded to execute this trying process of law. I must do Mr. Beals and his assistant the justice to say that, allowing for their rude natures, they were not wilfully insulting, but performed their duty with as few words as possible. Indeed, nothing can be more foreign to the character of the men of this country than any thing like intentional rudeness to a woman. We must not blame them for not respecting feelings which they could not understand.

When they had departed, Mrs. Clifford's pride came to the rescue. In reply to the words of sympathy which one cannot help offering in such cases, she said it was a thing of no importance at all. "My son will come or send before these people actually proceed to sell our property! It can never be that the very furniture of my house is to be taken away by a low person like Grinder! I cannot imagine why Augustus does not write! I expected he would have sent us funds long ago!"

It would have been unavailing to convince the poor lady that her son might not probably find it very easy to pick up money, even in the city, in these times; so we turned the discourse gradually to other things. I stated the purpose of my long walk and its ill success; and after some attempts at conversation—laboured enough when all hearts were full of one subject, and that, one that did not bear handling—I invited Mrs. Clifford with her daughters to remove to our house until Augustus should return.

The old lady's manner was stately enough for Queen Elizabeth. She thanked me very graciously, but felt quite too sad, as well as too infirm, she said, to think of quitting home. And with this reply I was about to take my leave, when Anna, suddenly turning to her mother, declared she should like very much to accept the invitation.

It was as easy to read high displeasure in the countenance of the mother as most painful surprise in that of the gentle Rose. But Anna, though her cheek was flushed and her lip quivering with emotion, persisted in her wish.

"You will return with me now?"

"Not just now, but this evening."

And I promised to send.

* * * * * * *

"What *must* you have thought of me?" said the dear girl as I welcomed her. "But you could not suppose for a moment that I really coveted a visit when my poor mother's heart was so cruelly wrung! Ah no! it was a lucky thought that struck me when you said Mrs. Larkins wanted a servant. It flashed upon me that in that way I might earn a pittance, however small, on which mamma and Rose can subsist until we hear from Augustus. You see what these horrid debts come to, and we are absolutely without present resources. Ah! I see what you are going to say; but do not even speak of it! Mamma would rather die, I believe! Only get me in at Mrs. Larkins', and you shall see what a famous maid I'll make! I have learned *so* much since we came here! And I have arranged it all with Rose, that mamma shall never discover it. Mamma is a little deaf, you know, and does not hear casual observations, and Rose will take care that nobody tells her. Poor Rose cried a good deal at first, but she saw it was the best thing I could do for mamma, so she consented. She can easily do all that is needed at home, while my strong arms"—and here she extended a pair that Cleopatra might have envied, so round, so graceful, so perfect—"my strong arms can earn all the little comforts, that are every thing to poor mamma! Won't it be delightful! Oh, I shall be so happy! There is only one sad side. My mother will think—till Augustus returns—that I have selfishly flown from her trials." And at the thought she burst into tears, for the remembrance of her mother's displeasure weighed sorely upon her.

I have not thought it necessary to record the various interruptions which I could not help making to this plan. Anna's warmth overpowered all I could say, and she succeeded in convincing my reason at least, if not my feelings, that it was the best thing for

the present. Her eyes did not allow of close application to the needle, and the uncertainty of that most laborious of all ways of earning a poor living, was a further objection. In the country few persons undertake needlework as a business. Sometimes a widow with children, or a wife whose husband frequents the tavern, earns a scanty and ill-paid addition to her means in this way, and with such it seems hardly right for the young and healthy to interfere. But "girls" are universally in request, and get as well paid and much better treated than schoolmistresses, with far less wearing employment. I knew that at Mrs. Larkins' Anna would meet with decent treatment, and be sure of a punctual dollar per week; since Mr. Larkins hates mixing griddle-cakes too much ever to lose a girl for want of this essential security.

The thing was settled, and all I could do was to procure the introduction.

Mrs. Larkins was at first a little afraid of "such a lady" for a help, but after a close and searching examination, she consented to engage Miss Clifford for a week.

I left Anna in excellent spirits, and, during several evening visits which she contrived to make me in the course of this her first week of servitude, she declared herself well satisfied with her situation, and only afraid that Mrs. Larkins would not care to retain one who was so awkward about many things required in her household. But she must have underrated her own skill, for on the Saturday evening, Mr. Larkins put into her hands a silver dollar, with a very humble request for a permanent engagement.

The spending of that dollar, Anna Clifford declared to me was the greatest pleasure she could remember.

CHAPTER IV.

CHARACTERISTICS.

That maid is born of middle earth,
And may of man be won.

THAT blessed privilege of the state of "girlhood" in the country—the undisturbed possession of Sunday—not falling to the lot of Miss Clifford, she could only snatch a moment to visit her mother and sister, and deposit with the latter the various little matters which were the fruit of her first earnings. She went, however, in high spirits. "Poor Rose will be so happy!" she said.

When she returned, a cloud sat on her beautiful brow, and her cheeks bore the marks of much weeping. "Mamma received me very coldly," she said; "she thinks I am enjoying myself with you! But I must bear this—it is a part of my duty, and I thought I had made up my mind to it. 'Twill be but a little while! When Augustus comes, all will be well again."

Strong in virtuous resolution, Anna returned to her toil. Another week or two passed, and the Larkinses continued to esteem themselves the most fortunate of girl-hunters. Anna's active habits, strong sense, and high principle, made all go well; and the influence which she soon established over the household, was such as superior intellect would naturally command, where there was no idea of difference of station. Mrs. Larkins would have thought the roughest of her neighbours' daughters entitled to a full equality with herself; and she treated Miss Clifford with all the additional respect which her real superiority demanded. It has been well said that the highest intellectual qualifications may find employment in the arrangements of a household; and our friends the Larkinses, young and old, if they had ever heard of the doctrine, would, I doubt not, have subscribed to it heartily, for they will never forget Miss Clifford's reign. Without dictating, like good Mrs. Mason, in the Cottagers of Glenburnie, (whose benefits,

I have sometimes thought, must have been harder to bear than other people's injuries,) she continued to introduce many excellent improvements, and indeed a general reform throughout. The beds were shielded from public view; the family ablutions were no longer performed in an iron skillet on the hearth, or a trough under the eaves; and Mrs. Larkins solemnly burnt the willow switch which had hitherto been her only means of government, declaring the children never required it under Miss Clifford's excellent management. Thus encouraged by her success in the process of civilization, Anna told me laughingly that she did not despair of the highest step—to induce Mrs. Larkins to boil corned beef instead of frying it, and Mr. Larkins to leave off tobacco. And far from feeling degraded by her labours, she said she was quite raised in her own opinion by the discovery of her power of being useful.

I own I suspected a little the solidity of this boast of independence. We sometimes say such things for a double purpose—as a boy passing through a church-yard at night whistles partly to show he is not afraid and partly to keep up his courage. Anna's position with regard to the people with whom she lived, was indeed, as we have said, one of decided superiority. To see her maid well drest and at leisure every afternoon, seated in the "keepin'-room" ready to be introduced to any one who should call; to give her always the lady-like title of "Miss," and to share with her whatever was laborious or unpleasant in the daily business—this Mrs. Larkins considered perfectly proper in all cases, and to Miss Clifford she gladly conceded more in the way of respectful observance. But in this vulgar world, spite of all that philosophers have said and poets sung, there lurks yet a certain degree of prejudice, which makes real independence not one of the cheap virtues.

> All lots are equal, and all states the same,
> Alike in merit though unlike in name.

Yet if we look for a recognition of this truth any where out of the woods, we shall probably be frowned upon as very wild waifs from dream-land—visionaries, who, in this enlightened age, can still cling to the antiquated notion, that theory should be the mould

of practice. So, in my pride of worldly wisdom, I took upon me to doubt whether my friend Anna was indeed the heroine she thought herself. The matter was not long doubtful.

Among the gentlemen who had been disposed to play the agreeable to Miss Clifford, was a certain Captain Maguire, an Irish officer, who had met her in Montreal. From Anna herself one would never have learned that her beauty had found a solitary adorer; but the tender and unselfish Rose could not help boasting a little, in her quiet way, of the triumphs of her sister's charms. She had thought well of the Captain's pretensions, and rather wondered that his handsome person and gallant bearing had not made some impression upon Anna, who was the object of his devoted attention.

"But Anna thought him a coxcomb," she said, "and never gave him the least crumb of encouragement; so, poor fellow! he gave over in despair."

Now, as it would happen, just at the wrong time, this unencouraged and despairing gentleman chanced to be one of a party who made a flying pilgrimage to the prairies; and being thus far favoured by chance, he took his further fate into his own hands, so far as sufficed to bring him to the humble village which he had understood to be shone upon temporarily by the bright eyes of Miss Clifford. He went first to her mother's, of course, and during a short call, ascertained from the old lady that her youngest daughter was on a visit to us. The Captain was not slow in taking advantage of the information, and he was at our door before Rose had at all made up her mind what should be done in such an emergency.

I was equally embarrassed, since one never knows on what nice point those things called love affairs may turn. However, I detained the Captain, and wrote a note to Miss Clifford. What was my surprise when a verbal answer was returned, inviting Captain Maguire and myself to Mrs. Larkins'. There was no alternative, so I shawled forthwith; but I really do not know how I led the young gentleman through the shop into the rag-carpeted sitting-room of Mrs. Larkins. The scene upon which the door opened must have been a novel one for fashionable optics.

Anna Clifford, with a white apron depending from her taper

waist, stood at the ironing-table, half hidden by a clothes-frame already well covered with garments of all sizes. Mrs. Larkins occupied her own, dear, creaking rocking-chair; holding a little one in her lap, and jogging another in the cradle, while blue-eyed minims trotted about or sat gravely staring at the strangers.

"Get up, young 'uns!" said Mrs. Larkins, hastily, as Captain Maguire's imposing presence caught her eye, and Miss Clifford came forward to welcome him; "Jump up! clear out!" And as she spoke she tipped one of the minims off a chair, offering the vacated seat to the gentleman, who, not noticing that it was a nursing-chair, some three or four inches lower than usual, plumped into it after a peculiar fashion, a specimen of bathos far less amusing to the young officer than to the infant Larkinses, who burst into a very natural laugh.

"Shut up!" said the mother, reprovingly; "you haven't a grain o' manners! What must you blaat out so for?" Then turning to the Captain with an air of true maternal mortification, she observed, "I dare say you've noticed how much worse children always behave when there's company. Mine always act like Sancho! How do you do, sir, and how's your folks?"

This civility was delivered with an indescribable drawl, and an accent which can never be expressed on paper.

Captain Maguire replied by giving satisfactory assurance of his own health; but having a large family connection and no particular home, perhaps thought it unnecessary to notice the second branch of Mrs. Larkins' inquiry.

Miss Clifford meanwhile asked after friends in Montreal and elsewhere, and entertained her dashing beau with all the ease and grace that belonged to the drawing-rooms in which they had last met. It was most amusing to note the air with which Anna ran over the splendid names of her quondam friends, and contrast it with the puzzled look which would make itself evident, spite of "power of face," in the countenance of her visitor. Never was man more completely mystified.

At the very first pause, Mrs. Larkins, who was particularly social, and who had seemed watching a chance to "put in," asked the Captain, with much earnestness, if he knew "a man by the name of Maguire," who had been in "Canady" in the last war.

"Was he any relation to the Captain? He used to peddle some among the sojers around Montreal and those parts."

The Captain declared he did not recollect the gentleman, but he had hundreds of Irish cousins, and thought it highly probable that Mrs. Larkins' friend might be one of them.

"Oh! he wasn't an Irishman at all! He was a very respectable man!" said the lady.

"Ah then!" remarked the Captain, with perfect gravity, "I'm quite sure he can't be one of my cousins!"

And Mrs. Larkins gravely replied, "No, I dare say he wasn't; but I thought I'd ask. What are you a cracklin' so between your teeth?" continued she, addressing Daniel Webster.

"Oh! the bark of pork," replied the young gentleman.

"*Rind*, Webster," said Anna; "you should say *rind*."

"Well! rind, then," was the reply.

Mr. Larkins now brought in a huge armful of stove-wood, which he threw into a corner with a loud crash.

"Will there be as much wood as you'll want, Miss Clifford?" said he.

"Yes—quite enough, thank you," said Anna, composedly; "I have nearly finished the ironing."

At this, the Captain, with a look in which was concentrated the essence of a dozen shrugs, took his leave, declaring himself quite delighted to have found Miss Clifford looking so well.

We were no sooner in the open air than he began—and I did not wonder—

"May I ask—will you tell me, Madam, what is the meaning of Miss Clifford's travestie? Is she masquerading for some frolic? or is it a bet?—for I know young ladies do bet, sometimes—"

"Neither, sir," I replied. "Miss Clifford is, in sad and sober earnest, filling the place of a servant, that she may procure the necessaries of life for her family. More than one friend would gladly offer aid in an emergency which we trust will be only temporary, but Miss Clifford, with rare independence, prefers devoting herself as you have seen."

"Bless my soul! what a noble girl! What uncommon spirit and resolution! I never heard anything like it! Such a splen-

did creature to be so sacrificed!" These and a hundred other enthusiastic expressions broke from the gay Captain, while I recounted some of the circumstances which had brought Mrs. Clifford's family to this low ebb; but as he pursued his trip to the prairies the next morning without attempting to procure another interview with the lady he so warmly admired, I came to the conclusion—not a very uncharitable one, I hope—that Anna had shown her usual acuteness in the estimate she had formed of his character.

Perhaps the Captain thought his pay too trifling to be shared with so exalted a heroine. But we must not complain, for his mystified look and manner at Mrs. Larkins' affords us a permanent income of laughter, which is something in these dull times; and I have learned, by means of his visit, that there is one really independent woman in the world.

CHAPTER V.

DARKNESS AND LIGHT.

Time and tide had thus their sway,
Yielding, like an April day,
Smiling noon for sullen morrow,
Years of joy for hours of sorrow.

As levying day had come before it was expected, so selling day, the time so dreaded by the affectionate daughters, came duly on, and no tidings yet of Augustus. Many letters had been forwarded to his address in New York, and no answers arriving, the anxiety of the family had been such as almost to drown all sense of the hopeless, helpless destitution which now seemed to threaten them. Being alone at this time, and wishing that whatever it was possible to do might be done properly for Mrs. Clifford, I took the liberty of sending for a neighbour, that is, a country neighbour—one who lived "next door about four miles off"—a gentleman well versed in the law, though not practising professionally.

Mr. Edward Percival, this friend of ours, came into this country—then a land of promise indeed—some seven years since. Having inherited a large tract of wild land, he chose to leave great advantages behind him for the sake of becoming an improver—a planter—a pioneer—what not? There must be some marvellous witchery in the idea of being a land-holder, if we may judge by the number of people who undertake this wild, rough life without the slightest necessity. Englishmen seem to be peculiarly attracted by the idea of unlimited shooting—a privilege so jealously monopolized by the great in their own country; but with our own citizens this is usually a matter of small interest. Be the spell what it may, we shall not wish to see it reversed while it brings us neighbours like Mr. Percival.

He came, he saw, he conquered—and Cæsar's victory must

pale by comparison, for Mr. Percival overcame a sheriff, and obtained an extension of time. I say he came—that was a matter of course, seeing he was sent for by a lady. He saw—but I am sadly afraid it was not the sight either of Mrs. Clifford or myself that enlisted his sympathies so completely. He saw two very lovely young ladies—for Anna had easily obtained a furlough for a day that she might comfort her mother and sister under their trials. And Mr. Edward Percival, though no beau, was made of "penetrable stuff," and felt his heart strangely moved by the unaffected sensibility and dutiful solicitude of those two sad-hearted daughters. By what particular course of strategy he conquered Sheriff Beals I have never learned, but I have understood there is but one avenue to law-hardened hearts, and I suppose some knowledge of the profession had endued Mr. Percival with the acumen required for discovering this covered way.

The result was that Mrs. Clifford retained her fine old chased gold watch, with its massive hook and crested seal, with several other "superfluities" on which the law had laid its chill grasp; and the two Miss Cliffords, though they did not fall at Mr. Percival's feet to thank him for his intervention, looked as if they could have done so; and the gentleman himself, as he took his leave, gave utterance to some consoling expressions, which fell with strange warmth from lips usually very guarded. So all was well thus far.

But Augustus came not. Anna returned to her householdry, Mrs. Clifford to her reading, and Rose to her round of anxious cares and painful economy. Another week wore away—another mail reached our Thule, and brought no tidings from the lost one. Agonizing apprehensions were fast assuming the form of certainties, and even Anna was yielding to despair, when Mr. Percival, who had not failed to acquaint himself with the condition of things, announced his intention of going to New York, and offered his services in making the requisite inquiries after young Clifford.

We have not been informed what urgent business called Mr. Percival eastward, but conclude it to have been something sudden and pressing, as he had returned from New York but a few weeks before.

The suspense of our unhappy friends was destined to be lengthened out yet another week; but we need not detain our readers proportionally. At the end of that period then, after Mrs. Clifford and her daughters had renounced all thoughts but one, Mr. Percival returned, bringing with him the long-lost son and brother; or, rather, what might seem more the shadow than the substance of the gallant youth who had left us some three months before.

Poor Augustus—his heart wrung, and his brain on the rack when he left us—had been seized with a fever, so violent in its symptoms, that no hotel at Buffalo would receive him, through fear of infection. Other lodging places presenting the same difficulty, he was at last placed with a poor coloured woman, on the outskirts of the town; poverty, and perhaps a better motive, inducing her to overlook the danger. Here he was nursed, with the tenderness so characteristic of that kind-hearted race, through a course of typhus fever; and from the first he had never been long enough himself to give the address of his friends. Tracing him as far as Buffalo by means of the steamboat's books, Mr. Percival had found no difficulty in discovering the place of his retreat. The invalid was beginning to sit up a little, and had written a few lines to his mother by the mail of that very day.

Need we say that our friends forgot even grinding poverty for awhile?

Home, and the attentions of those we love, have wondrous restorative powers. Augustus gained strength rapidly, and exulted in the change as only those who have

> Long endured
> A fever's agonies, and fed on drugs,

can exult, in the sunshine and the breeze. The exhilaration of his spirits amounted almost to delirium. He would recount again and again the kindness of his dark nurse, and in happy oblivion of the narrowness of circumstances which drove him from home, reiterate his schemes of gratitude to poor dear Chloe—schemes devised on a scale better befitting past than present fortunes. As the exquisite sense of recovery subsided, however, care reasserted

her empire, and poor Augustus gradually sank into his former condition of premature gravity.

Here, again, Mr. Percival's affairs seemed to favour our young friend strangely; for while Augustus had been gaining strength and losing spirits, that gentleman made the discovery that he was in pressing want of an assistant in his business. He had great tracts of land in far-away counties, calling for immediate attention; there was a great amount of overcharged taxes which must be argued down (if possible) at various offices; he had distant and very slippery debtors—in short, just such a partner as Augustus Clifford would make was evidently indispensable; and, Augustus got well.

Anna had come home to help nurse her brother, but with such positive promise of return, that Mr. Larkins did not go girl-hunting, but mixed griddle-cakes and dressed the children unrepiningly during the interregnum. When Augustus recovered, the secret of the weekly dollar was confided to him, and Anna prepared for going back to her "place." The brother was naturally very averse to this, and laboured hard to persuade her that he should now be able to make all comfortable without this terrible sacrifice. But she persisted in fulfilling her engagement, and, moreover, declared that it really was not a sacrifice worth naming.

"Look at your hands, dear Anna!" said Rose.

"Oh! I do look at them—but what then? Of what possible use are white satin hands in the country? I should have browned them with gardening, if nothing else; and when once Uncle Hargrave's money comes, a few weeks' gloving will make a lady of me again."

"But Mr. Percival, I am sure—" Rose tried to whisper, but Anna would not hear her, and only ran away the faster.

By and by, Uncle Hargrave's legacy did come, and whether by a gloving process or not, it was not long before Anna's hands recovered their beauty. Mrs. Larkins lost the best "help" she ever had, and Anna at length told all to her mother, who learned more by means of this effort of her daughter, than all her misfortunes had been able to teach her.

The legacy, like many a golden dream, had been tricked out by the capricious wand of Fancy. In its real and tangible form,

far from enabling Mrs. Clifford to return to city splendour, it proved so moderate in size that she was obliged to perceive that a comfortable home even in the country would depend, in some degree, on economy and good management. Certainty being thus substituted for the vague and glittering phantom which had misled her, and helped to benumb her naturally good understanding, she set herself about the work of reform with more vigour than could have been anticipated; and an expression of quiet happiness again took possession of faces which had long been saddened by present or dreaded evils.

Strange to say, Mr. Edward Percival, by nature the most frank, manly, straightforward person in the world, seems lately to have taken a manœuvring turn. After showing very unmistakable signs of an especial admiration of Mrs. Larkins' "girl," he scarce ventures to offer her the slightest attention. At the same time, his interest in the ponderous mamma is remarkable, to say the least. Hardly a fine day passes that does not see a certain low open carriage at Mrs. Clifford's door, and a grave but gallant cavalier—handsome and well-equipped—soliciting the old lady's company for a short drive. This is certainly a very delicate mode of mesmerizing a young lady, but it is not without effect. Anna does not go to sleep—far from it! but her eyelids are observed to droop more than usual, and choice flowers, which come almost daily from the mesmerizer's green-house, are very apt to find their way from the parlour vase to the soft ringlets of the lovely sleep-waker. What these signs may portend we must leave to the scientific.

Mr. Percival came from the very heart's core of Yankeeland; he may say with Barlow,

All my bones are made of Indian corn—

he is a conscientious Presbyterian, and he has been four years a widower. All these disabilities have been duly represented to Miss Clifford; nay—I will not aver that they may not even have been wickedly dwelt upon—thrown in her teeth, as it were, by one who loves to tease such victims; and I have come to the conclusion, which Anna herself suggested to me the other day, hiding at the same time her blushing face on my shoulder, after a confidential chit-chat, "There certainly is a fate in these things."

AN EMBROIDERED FACT.

All the stories in this volume are from the life—either in facts or characters, or both; but the one which succeeds is as nearly a transcript of actual reality, as could well be without giving names and dates. The ride and its object—the suspicion—the pursuit—the arrest—and the denouement—were described to me by the hero himself, ere yet the memory of the toilsome winning of his beautiful bride had lost any of its freshness.

What the phrenologists call "approbativeness" is an excellent development, but we may have it too full. People born without it are intolerable—those who have a superabundance, pay dearly enough for being agreeable. They win, without conscious effort, —instinctively, as it were,—"golden opinions" from those with whom they associate; and too good a reputation is sometimes a severe tax in more ways than one. As with other luxuries, it costs a good deal to support it. One of our friends got rid of his, inadvertently. We have the story from himself, only adding some explanations of our own.

George Elliott had, from his childhood, been the model of all excellence among his own family. His parents had other children, and they all did very much as they pleased, not having set out with a character to support. They did not always please to prefer what was wisest; and then they were sure of a lecture, to which George's prudence and self-government afforded the text.

George must have been really a good fellow, for his brothers loved him in spite of his position; and as for his sisters, they thought no mortal man, and hardly even Thaddeus of Warsaw, approached him in excellence. He was, in truth, less spoiled by this general homage than was to be expected. The shape of his head was not improved by the cultivation of a faculty which shows it-

self in squaring out the head just on each side the crown; but his black hair hid the superfluity, and the ceaseless good humour that beamed from his eyes, joined to a fine ruddy complexion and white teeth, made him an Adonis in the eyes of all the young ladies of the neighbourhood. Not a house but was open to him—not a mamma but smiled upon him. He was already "well to do," and such qualities as his promised constant bettering.

But here, again, George experienced the disadvantage of being too well liked. The invariable welcome which awaited him, the capital footing on which he stood with the mammas and papas, and the fear that whenever he should select a special partner, it would be at the expense of a large amount of friendship and attention, had kept him undecided until five-and-twenty; and, we fear, a little too well satisfied with himself to promise uncommonly well as a husband.

Among his perfections,—in his father's eyes, at least,—was a strict and energetic attention to matters of business. He was the factotum in every affair requiring peculiar skill and discretion. He travelled, he negotiated, he advised. Never was there an eldest son on whose indomitable prudence a father could rely so completely. Was a hard thing to be said, George must say it—because George could say it without hurting any body's feelings. Was a slippery debtor to be approached, George was the messenger; and if it proved necessary to follow the "defaulter" to Texas, he never flinched, and generally returned with man or money. We will not say that such trusts were always agreeable; indeed, we have already hinted that our friend sometimes found his reputation rather costly. But developments are fate, and his "approbativeness" kept on growing.

Once upon a time, when affairs called George from home, he was about to pass the night in a village, about sixty-five miles from his father's residence. There was no one to visit, for he knew none but the gentleman with whom his business lay; and he strolled out after tea, as men will when they have nothing else to do, not exactly seeking adventure, but in a mood of mind to be well pleased with any thing that should occur, to help off the evening. He paced the bank of the noisy little "privilege" that turned the grist-mill, the carding machine and the trip hammer,

which formed the wealth of the village, until the light had faded to that pleasant gray which we poetically call dusk; and he was about returning to the inn to read the newspaper over again, when a wild-looking girl, with a shawl over her head, accosted him.

"They want you, up yander," she said, in a mumbling and embarrassed tone.

George's eyes followed the direction of the thick red finger, and rested upon a pretty cottage on the side of a hill, at no great distance.

"Who wants me? There must be some mistake."

The girl stood perfectly still, staring straight forward.

"Who is it that wishes to see me?" repeated George. "Whom were you told to ask for?"

"You're the one," said the messenger, confidently. "I've forgot the name."

"Was it Elliott?" asked George.

"Yes," said the messenger; "they want you right off."

Musingly did George follow the girl up the hillside, perfectly convinced of the impracticability of getting any thing more out of her, and tolerably certain that he could not be the person in requisition. Why did he go then? We have already said that he was born to oblige, and also that he found the Templeville hotel somewhat dull.

The clumsy-footed emissary turned into a little court, full of spring flowers, and passing through a porch shaded to perfect darkness by climbing plants, opened a door on the right. The room thus disclosed was a pretty rural parlour, on the sofa of which lay a young girl in a white wrapper, with an elderly lady sitting by her side.

"Here he is," said the girl; "I've fetched 'um."

The young lady started—the elder screamed outright.

"Who is this?" said the more ancient, turning to the girl with an annihilating frown, and seeming entirely to forget that the young man *might* be innocent, and was therefore entitled to decent treatment.

"I perceive there has been some mistake, madam," began our discomfited incomparable.

"Mistake! Oh yes, I dare say!" muttered the guardian,

with a most unbelieving air. Then turning to the stupid maid, she proceeded to scold her in an under tone, but with inconceivable rapidity and sharpness, while George stood most uneasily waiting the result. He felt inclined to disappear at once, but that course seemed liable to further misconstruction; and he was, moreover, rather attracted by the invalid, who, though embarrassed, lost not her ladylike self-possession.

"The girl is newly come to us, and quite ignorant," she said, in rather a deprecatory tone. "She was sent for our physician, and must have mistaken you—"

"Oh, very likely," interrupted the elder lady, who forgot to scold the maid as soon as the young lady ventured to speak to George. "Doctor Beasley, with his bald head and one eye, is exceedingly like this gentleman! Quite probable that Hetty mistook the one for the other!"

The air of incredulity with which this was said could not be mistaken; but the implication was one which it was impossible to notice under the circumstances; and George concluded that the only course left for him was to make his bow and leave his character behind him.

As he turned, with his hat in his hand, a letter fell from it to the floor, unobserved by him in his embarrassment. He had not cleared the porch, when the maid ran after him with it.

"Here, Mister, they say they don't want none of yer letters."

George looked in his hat, found he must have dropt a letter, and took it, though it was now too dark to examine it. Here was a new confirmation of the evident suspicions of the lady-dragon as to some designs upon her fair charge.

Is it singular that a conviction began to dawn upon his mind that the said charge must possess considerable attractions?

"Don't touch that thing upon the table," says grandmamma, to the little one who is quietly playing on the floor.

"No, grandma," says the youth, and immediately leaves his play to get up and walk round and round the table, trying to reach the prohibited article.

George the prudent slept little that night. The young lady's eyes and voice, the delicate and languid grace of her figure, as she lay extended in evident feebleness on the sofa, rather unhinged

his philosophy; and he was, besides, not a little troubled by the recollection of the spiteful air of the duenna, and the probability that the error had cost the fair invalid some discomfort. Altogether, there was food for reverie; and a hasty, unrefreshing morning slumber had not made amends for a wakeful night, when he was aroused by the breakfast bell.

Inquiries respecting the people of the cottage elicited only the interesting information, that there was "an oldish woman, and a young gal," which added little to George's knowledge. The innkeeper guessed they were "pretty likely folks," but couldn't say, as they had not been there long.

George went home, but said nothing of his adventure. He said he did not think it worth while. But he thought it worth while, two weeks afterwards, to travel the sixty-five miles which lay between his home and Templeville, just to try whether the landlord might not have discovered something beyond the interesting facts before ascertained as to the "young gal" and her duenna.

But the innkeeper had added nothing to his store of information on this point, except the conclusion that the people on the hill were "fore-handed folks," and that there was a man who came once in a while to see them and brought them lots of things.

"A man!" said George. "Ah yes," (very unconcernedly, of course;) "of what age—about?"

"Oh, he always comes in the evening, and is off again early in the morning. Their help guesses he's an uncle or something."

Not much enlightened, even yet, George adopted the desperate resolution of trying boldly for an acquaintance. He judged it absolutely necessary to inquire after the health of the invalid. So, writing a civil card of inquiry, he walked up to the pretty cottage, and, after reconnoitering a little, rapped at the door, and awaited the coming of the stupid maid, with a trepidation quite new to his quiet and well-assured frame of mind.

What was his dismay when the aunt herself, with a face of iron, opened the door.

George was completely at a loss for the moment. The card was in his hand, but he could not offer it to the lady, so he stammered out something of his wish to inquire after the health of the

family, and to express his regret for the misunderstanding on the former occasion.

Rigid was the brow with which the careful dame heard this announcement, and wiry were the muscles which held the door half shut, as if defying a forty-young-man power of getting in without consent of the owner.

"We're all quite well, I thank you," she said, closing her lips as tightly as possible as soon as she had communicated the information.

George stood still, and the lady stood as still as he. She looked at the distant hills, and he at the door which had once disclosed to him the reclining figure in white. At length, finding it in vain to attempt wearying the grim portress into an invitation to enter this enchanted castle, he turned off in despair, when the young lady came through the gate, as if just returning from a walk.

George darted towards her, but the elder lady scarce allowed time for a word.

"Come, Julia," she said, "it is quite time you came in."

The young lady looked at George with a scarce perceptible smile, and such a comical expression, that their acquaintance seemed ripened in a moment.

"I must say good morning," said she, in a rather low tone, but so decidedly, that George, perceiving any attempt for a longer interview to be hopeless, put his card into her hand and departed —not without a secret vow that he would yet baffle the duenna.

The sixty-five miles seemed rather long this time, and his father remarked upon the difficulties which he must have encountered, to account for a two days' absence, and such a worn-out air. Yet all this time George persuaded himself that it was not *worth while* to mention his new acquaintance. He, with his old head upon young shoulders,—pattern of nice young men!—to find himself interested in a chance acquaintance—to be suspected by an ancient lady of designs upon her niece, and what was worse, to be conscious of a strong desire to furnish some foundation for such suspicions! Oh, it was too much! Pattern people find it so hard to come down to a neighbourly level with common, erring mortals! George found it easier to learn to perform the Templeville trip in the space of twenty-four hours, although it was, in

reality, pretty good work for twice that time. In truth, it began to be necessary for him to take Templeville in his way to any point of the compass; and, at last, chance, or some other power that favours the determined, gave him an unexpected advantage.

It was the elder lady's turn to be an invalid, and, while she was, perhaps, enjoying an interview with the veritable Dr. Beasley, his former unwitting representative espied the now blooming cheeks of the young lady among other roses in a pretty little arbour in the garden.

"The garden walls are high, and hard to climb," said Juliet once; and the pretty Julia of our story might have said much the same thing of the picket fence which separated her from her new friend. But George was on the other side of it before she could have had time to quote the line.

Could two young people, who met in this romantic sort of way, in these unromantic times,—and after many a momentary interview, cut short by the cares of a duenna, too,—fail to find some very particular subjects of conversation? We ask the initiated, not pretending to be *au fait* in these matters. However this may be, it must have been that very visit that enlightened George Elliott as to the young lady's position.

She was the prospective heiress of a bachelor uncle, who, in consequence of a violent prejudice against matrimony, had vowed all practicable vengeance in case she ventured to engage herself before the mature age of twenty-five, full six years of which were yet to come. A very liberal provision, which this same odd uncle allowed to the elder lady, Mrs. Roberts, who was his sister only by marriage, was made dependent upon the same point.

Now, the natural consequence of all this was, first, an irresistible inclination on Julia's part to fall in love, just for the sake of seeing whether her uncle would keep his word; and, secondly, from the extreme prudence of the aunt leading her to take up her residence in a region of clodhoppers, an inevitable proclivity of the damsel to fancy the very first tall, dark-eyed, personable youth who should come in her way. We are not sure that Julia told George all this. We give it merely as a comment of our own, by way of *avis au lecteur*.

The garden interview was prolonged until the ruddy-fingered

serving-maid was sent to seek Miss Julia; and as George was, on that occasion, put behind a thicket of lilacs for the moment, we infer that a considerable degree of intimacy had by this time been established between the young people.

Peaches were like little green velvet buttons when George was first mistaken for Dr. Beasley, and before they were ripe, he had learned to think it a small matter to ride one hundred and thirty miles in twenty-four hours, for the sake of spending an hour or two in the cottage garden at Templeville, and occasionally getting a cup of tea from the unwilling fingers of Mrs. Roberts.

He had, in the mean time, become the object of much remark at home. He had always been fond of a good horse, and rather celebrated for his equestrian skill; but people began to call him a jockey now—so many fine animals did he purchase, and so many did he discard again after only one trial on the Templeville road. The difficulty of breaking the subject at home had become greater with every visit, and our mirror of prudence had nearly persuaded Julia that her uncle's fortune was of no sort of consequence, and a six year's probation quite out of the question, before he could resolve to tell his father that he was about to marry a penniless young lady and her not very agreeable aunt—Mrs. Roberts being, of course, to be taken (fasting) with her niece.

While the disclosure was yet to make, a letter came for Mr. George Elliott, postmarked "Templeville," and directed in a prodigious scrawl with a very fine pen—a young-lady-like attempt at disguise which could not but draw attention at a country post-office, if any body could have suspected so prudent a youth of clandestine proceedings. This epistle, being opened, was found to contain only a few lines, most cautiously worded, to inform Mr. George Elliott that suspicions of treachery and fears of consequent calamity made a friend of his very miserable. Further specifications, diplomatically urged, gave Mr. Elliott to understand that the uncle was expected, and that there was reason to suppose he had been induced to plan a sudden removal of the cottagers to a far distant and (of course) inaccessible part of the country.

The rising sun of the next morning saw Elliott "making tracks" for Templeville, most literally; for the fierce pace of his gallant steed indented itself upon the moist soil in a striking man-

ner. He must reach there in the afternoon at all hazards; and, although he had more than once performed the same feat before, he was now so anxious lest some accident should cause delay, that he pushed on with unwonted vehemence. He had twice changed horses, and had passed through a small village about twenty miles from Templeville, when the people on the road noticed that he was closely pursued by two horsemen in fiery haste.

George rode like the Wild Huntsman, and his pursuers were nearly as well mounted. At every point they inquired how far the maker of those dashing tracks was in advance of them, and their breathless questions were always answered in such terms as induced them to hope their chase was nearly at an end. They spared neither whip nor spur, therefore; but their horses were not so well used to that rate of travel, and one of them gave out entirely just as they entered Templeville, with our tired hero full in sight.

George reached the tavern, and went, as was his wont, immediately to the stables, to see his horse cared for. He examined several stalls before he chose one, and was giving his directions to the ostler when he was rather roughly accosted by two persons, who took their places on either side of him, and began in very aggressive style asking him various questions. Our prudent friend was not, we regret to say, a member of the peace society; and he responded to these inquiries in a way which threatened difficulties in the pursuit of knowledge.

The crowd increased every moment. The whole town of Templeville seemed congregated in the stable-yard. "There he is!" "That's him!" "That's the chap!" "I'd know him for a thief, anywhere!" were the cheering exclamations that met Elliott's ear on every side.

Not to dwell unnecessarily on particulars, we may say at once that the elder of these gentlemen had been robbed of a pocket-book, containing a large sum of money, and that circumstances favoured the idea that the thief had taken the Templeville road. George's hard riding pointed him out as the delinquent; and his having gone into several stalls on his first arrival, led the bystanders to suppose he had been seeking for a place to secrete his booty.

We need not notice Elliott's indignant denials of the charge.

The old gentleman took very little notice of them, indeed. He rather advised him (as a friend) to give up the pocket-book at once, without attempting to deceive a person of his astuteness. George, who was anxious beyond every thing to be on his way to the cottage, and who, likewise, felt exceedingly unwilling to call upon his only acquaintance in the village, knowing that would be to insure a faithful report of the whole affair at home, offered to submit to a search, provided it might be performed in private and without unnecessary delay. To this, after some consultation, the old gentleman agreed; and the landlord, (who, by the way, disclaimed all knowledge of the accused, except that he had made a great many inquiries as to the people at the cottage,) was showing the way through the crowd to an inner room, when George encountered Mr. Henderson, the person to whom he was known.

All chance of escaping recognition was now at an end, and it became evident to George Elliott that, in addition to the loss of consideration by an imprudent marriage, he must expect a good deal of hard joking on the subject of hard riding. The gaping crowd, commenting audibly upon every point of his physiognomy and equipment, and agreeing, *nem. con.*, that he had state prison written upon his face if ever a fellow had, was nothing, compared with the keen sense of mortification which came with every thought of home. Julia's power, however, was irresistible; and George, perceiving that Mr. Henderson knew his accuser, requested an introduction, which was accordingly performed, to the great discomfiture of the old gentleman, who became unpleasantly sensible that his wild goose chase had led him a great way from his lost money, ruined a fine horse, and brought him into very unpleasant circumstances with a young gentleman, who, upon close examination, did not look half so much like a gallows-bird as he had supposed.

"Upon my word and honour, sir," said the old gentleman, wiping his forehead with an air of the greatest perplexity, "I am extremely sorry for this mistake. If I can make you any amends, this gentleman, Mr. Henderson, will answer for me, that I shall be happy to offer any atonement in my power."

George, of course, disclaimed any such wish, and, only anxious to see Julia, he shook hands with his accuser and hurried off.

Before he shut the door, the old gentleman stopped him. "Will you do me the favour to tell me, before we part, what possible inducement you could have for riding at such a pace?"

George laughed, said he was fond of fast riding, and disappeared.

* * * * * * *

Julia, in tears, and all the despair of nineteen, met George with the intelligence that her aunt, after appearing to favour them, must have played them false, and induced the uncle to insist upon an immediate change of residence.

"To-morrow morning," she said, "we are to leave here, for ever. My uncle has already arrived, and we should have set off this evening, but for the circumstance of his having been robbed on his way hither."

"Robbed?" said George.

"Yes. He is now in pursuit of the thief, and will not probably return before night."

As Julia said this, sobbing all the time as if her little heart would break, not for her uncle's loss, but her own woes, the door opened, and George's new acquaintance walked in.

"Hey-day, hey-day, here's a pretty affair! This is the nice youth that has persuaded you to throw away your bread and butter, is it?"

Then, coming nearer, and taking a better look at George, who had thrown off the India-rubber overcoat which western men are wont to wear when showers are probable, he burst into a hearty laugh as he recognized the object of his former suspicions.

"So it wasn't my pocket-book you wanted, sir?" said he.

"No, sir," said George, glad of so good an opening for his suit, "No, sir; it is your niece, without any pocket-book at all."

"Will you take her without?"

"With all my heart and soul!"

"In one year from this time I will not object, on those terms," said the old gentleman.

But he probably thought he owed some reparation for his hasty accusation, for, when the year was out, George got the niece and the pocket-book too; but he could not regain his reputation as the mirror of prudence. We have never heard, however, that this detracted materially from his happiness.

BITTER FRUITS FROM CHANCE-SOWN SEEDS.

In an attempt at mere fiction, I should scarcely have ventured upon the invention of a chain of circumstances so improbable as those which form the groundwork of the following sketch. We accept the axiom that Truth is often stranger than fiction; yet the mind instinctively refuses sympathy when fiction ventures too far beyond the bounds of our own experience or observation. Men are usually supposed to be actuated by sufficient motives, and by those which correspond, in some degree, with the springs of action in their kind at large; and where we see a striking departure from this general rule, we are apt to class the erratic somewhere in the many-graded list of the insane—a list which has, of late years, been made, by some speculators, long and wide enough to include Rousseau and Byron, as well as the most fiendish murderer, and any divine who ventures to look over the pale of his church.

Those who are acquainted with the peculiar tone of society in the new country may not, perhaps, find my characters unnatuarl; but it can hardly be expected that others would not doubt the truth of a description which supposes such deep-seated enmity towards those who had committed no offence, and such intolerable wrongs suffered without a possibility of legal redress. In ancient feudal times, small excuse served when the superior chose to vent his evil passions upon those whom Fate had rendered subject to his caprice. At this day, in the newly settled part of the Western country, the feudality is reversed; and it is the inferior who has it in his power, by means of an unenlightened or corrupt public sentiment, (referring always with more or lese distinctness to brute force,) to lord it over any one who, by an inconvenient integrity, or an unpopular refinement, is rendered obnoxious to those

who are more disposed to resent than to imitate what pretends to superiority. Thus much for the probability of what may naturally be expected to shock the credulity of the reader.

As to the main facts of the case—the character of the Coddington family—their adoption of the young girl—the unprovoked enmity of the Blanchards—their threats and plots—the catastrophe to which they contributed—and the unsatisfactory result of the effort to obtain justice—these were all communicated to me circumstantially, (by an intelligent friend who had resided near the spot where the occurrences took place,) as a sort of psychological problem which, even in that country it was not easy to solve. The same friend afterwards sent me a newspaper published in the same county, in which various details were given, to which details was appended a public protest of the aggrieved party, with other matters touching the case—all which remained uncontradicted so far as I have ever heard.

I should not have occupied so much time with these explanatory remarks, but for objections which have been made to the probability of my story. The old man, though sketched from life, is introduced here arbitrarily, to supply what was wanting as to the origin of the young girl who exhibited traits so remarkable. Nothing of her parentage has reached me; but it seems natural to suppose that a soul which partook of the passionate and poetic energy of a Sappho, must have been moulded by no common lot. One can scarcely imagine the descendant of a line of sober farmers, kindling into a love as ideal as that of Petrarch, and pouring out her feelings in poetic measures like an Improvisatrice, in a mental climate too frigid to call into life any but irrepressible germs of genius. Smothered fire there must have been somewhere, among our Julia's rough ancestry. I have supposed it to descend to her through the old Indian-killer, from the more genial and impulsive South.

CHAPTER I.

Eyes which can but ill define
  Shapes that rise about and near,
Through the far horizon's line
  Stretch a vision free and clear:
Memories feeble to retrace
  Yesterday's immediate flow,
Find a dear familiar face
  In each hour of long ago.—MILNES.

IN wandering through the woods where solitude seems to hold undivided reign, so that one learns to fancy companionable qualities in the flowers, and decided sympathetic intelligence in the bright-eyed squirrel, it is not uncommon to find originals odd enough to make the fortune of a human menagerie, such as will doubtless form, at no distant day, a new resource for the curious. If any of the experimental philosophers of the day should undertake a collection of this nature, I recommend the woods of the West as a hopeful field for the search. Odd people are odder in the country than in town, because there is nothing like collision to smooth down their salient points, and because solitude is the nurse of reverie, which is well known to be the originator of many an erratic freak. There is a foster relationship, at least between solitude and oddity, and nowhere is this more evident than in the free and easy new country. A fair specimen used to thrive in a certain green wood, not a thousand miles from this spot; a veteran who bore in his furrowed front the traces of many a year of hardship and exposure, and whose eyes retained but little of the twinkling light which must have distinguished them in early life, but which had become submerged in at least a twilight darkness, which scarce allowed him to distinguish the light of a candle. His limbs were withered, and almost useless; his voice shrunk to a piping treble, and his trembling hands but imperfectly performed their favourite office of carrying a tumbler to his lips. His tongue

alone escaped the general decay; and in this one organ were concentrated (as it is with the touch in cases of blindness,) the potency of all the rest. If we may trust his own account, his adventures had been only less varied and wonderful, than those of Sinbad or Baron Munchausen. But we used sometimes to think distance may be the source of deception, in matters of time as well as of space, and so made due allowance for faulty perspective in his reminiscences.

His house was as different from all other houses, as he himself was from all other men. It was shaped somewhat like a beehive; and, instead of ordinary walls, the shingles continued in uninterrupted courses from the peak to the ground. At one side was a stick chimney, and this was finished on the top by the remnant of a stone churn; whether put there to perform the legitimate office of a chimney-pot, or merely as an architectural ornament, I cannot say. It had an *unique* air, at any rate, when one first espied it after miles of solitary riding, where no tree had fallen, except those which were removed in making the road. A luxuriant hop-vine crept up the shingles until it wound itself around this same broken churn, and then, seeking further support, the long ends still stretched out in every direction, so numerous and so lithe, that every passing breeze made them whirl like green-robed fairies dancing hornpipes about the chimney, in preparation for a descent upon the inhabitants below.

At the side opposite the chimney, was a sort of stair-case, scarcely more than a ladder, leading to the upper chamber, carried up outside through lack of room in the little cottage; and this airy flight was the visible sign of a change which took place in the old man's establishment, towards the latter part of his life. A grand-daughter, the orphan of his only son, had come to him in utter destitution, and this made it necessary to have a second apartment in the shingled hive; so the stairs were built outside as we have said, and Julia Brand was installed in the wee chamber to which it led. She was a girl of twelve, perhaps, at this time, and soon became all in all to her aged relative. But we will put her off for the present, that we may recall at more length our recollections of old Richard Brand. The race of rough old pioneers, to which he belonged, was fast passing away; and emi-

gration and improvement are sweeping from the face of the land, every trace of their existence. The spirit by which they were animated has no fellowship with steamboats and railroads; their pleasures were not increased but diminished by the rapid accession of population, for whom they had done much to prepare the way. The younger and hardier of their number felt themselves elbowed, and so pressed onward to the boundless prairies of the far West; the old shrunk from contact with society, and gathered themselves, as if to await the mighty hunter in characteristic fashion. Old Brand belonged to the latter class. He looked ninety; but much allowance must be made for winter storms and night-watches, and such irregularities and exposure as are sure to keep an account against man, and to score their demands upon his body, both within and without.

We have said that the house had a wild and strange look, and the aspect of the tenant of the little nest was that of an old wizard. He would sit by the side of the door, enjoying the sunshine, and making marks on the sand with the long staff which seldom quitted his feeble hands, while his favourite cat purred at his feet, or perched herself on his shoulder, rubbing herself against his grey locks, unreproved. Weird and sad was his silent aspect; but once set him talking, or place in his hands his battered violin, and you would no longer find *silence* tiresome. One string was generally all that the instrument could boast; but that one, like the tongue of the owner, performed more than its share. It could say,

> Hey, Betty Martin, tip-toe, tip-toe,
> Hey, Betty Martin, tip-toe fine:
> Can't get a husband to please her, please her,
> Can't get a husband to please her mind!

as plain as any human lips and teeth could make the same taunting observation; but if you ventured to compare the old magician to Paganini, "Humph!" he would say, with a toss of his little grey head, "ninny I may be, but pagan I a'n't, any how; for do I eat little babies, and drink nothing but water?"

Nobody ever ventured to give an affirmative answer to either

branch of this question; so the old man triumphed in the refutation of the slander.

Directly in front of the door by which old Brand usually sat, was a pit, four or five feet deep, perhaps, and two feet in diameter at the top, and still wider at the bottom, where it was strewn with broken bottles and jugs. (Mr. Brand had, by some accident, good store of these.) This pit was generally covered during the day, but for many years the platform was at night drawn within the door, with all the circumspection that attended the raising of a draw-bridge before a castle gate in ancient times.

"Is that a wolf-trap?" inquired an uninitiated guest. An explosion of laughter met this truly *green* question.

"A wolf-trap! O! massy! what a wolf-hunter you be! You bought that 'ere fine broadcloth coat out of bounty money, didn't ye? How I should laugh to see ye where our Jake was once, when he war'n't more than twelve year old! You'd grin till a wolf would be a fool to ye! I had a real wolf-trap then, *I* tell ye! There had been a wolf around, that was the hungriest critter you ever heard tell on. Nobody pretended to keep a sheep, and as for little pigs, they war'n't a circumstance. He'd eat a litter in one night. Well! I dug my trap plenty deep enough, and all the dirt I took out on't was laid up o' one side, slantindicler, up hill like, so as to make the jump a pretty good one; and then the other sides was built up close with logs. It was a sneezer of a trap. So there I baited and baited, and watched and waited; but pigs was plenty where they was easier come at, and no wolf came. By-and-by our old yellow mare died, and what does I do but goes and whops th' old mare into the trap. 'There!' says I to Jake, says I, 'that would catch th' old Nick; let's see what the old wolf 'll say to it.' So the next night we watch'd, and it war'n't hardly midnight, when the wolf come along to go to the hog-pen. He scented old Poll quick enough; and I tell ye! the way he went into the trap war'n't slow. It was jist as a young feller falls in love; head over heels. Well! now the question was, how we should kill the villain; and while we was a consultin' about that, and one old hunter proposin' one thing, and another another, our Jake says to me, says he, 'Father,' says he, 'I've got a plan in my head that I know'll do! I'll bang him

over the head with this knotty stick.' And before you could say Jack Robinson, in that tarnal critter jump'd, and went at him. It was a tough battle, *I* tell ye! The wolf grinned; but Jake he never stopped to grin, but put it on to him as cool as a cowcumber, till he got so he could see his brains, and then he was satisfied. 'Now pull me out!' says little Jake, says he, 'And I tell ye what! if it *a'n't* daylight, I want my breakfast!' And Jake was a show, any how! What with his own scratches and the spatters of the wolf's blood, he look'd as if the Indians had scalped him all over."

"But what is *this* hole for?" persisted the visiter, who found himself as far from the point as ever.

"Did you ever see a Indian?" said the wizard.

"No! oh yes; I saw Black Hawk and his party, at Washington ——"

"Black Hawk! ho, ho, ho! and Tommy Hawk too, I 'spose! Indians dress'd off to fool the big bugs up there! But *I* mean *real* Indians—Indians at home, in the woods—devils that's as thirsty for white men's blood as painters!* Why, when I come first into the Michig*an*, they were as thick as huckleberries. We didn't mind shooting 'em any more than if they'd had four legs. That's a foolish law that won't let a man kill an Indian! Some people pretend to think the niggers haven't got souls, but for my part I *know* they have; as for Indians, it's all nonsense! I was brought up right in with the blacks. My father own'd a real raft on 'em, and they was as human as any body. When my father died, and every thing he had in the world wouldn't half pay his debts, our old Momma Venus took mother home to her cabin, and done for her as long as she lived. Not but what we boys helped her as much as we could, but we had nothing to begin with, and never had no larnin'. I was the oldest, and father died when I was twelve year old, and he hadn't begun to think about gettin' a schoolmaster on the plantation. I used to be in with our niggers, that is, them that used to be ours; and though I'd lick'd 'em and kick'd 'em many a time, they was jist as good to me as if I'd been their own colour. But I wanted to get some larnin', so I used to lie on the floor of their cabins, with my head to the fire, and so study a spellin'-book some Yankees had gi'n

* Panthers.

me, by the light of the pine knots and hickory bark. The Yankee people was good friends to me too, and when I got old enough, some on 'em sent me down to New Orleans with a flat, loaded with flour and bacon.

"Now in them days there was no goin' up and down the Mississippi in comfort, upon 'count of the Spaniards. The very first village I came to, they hailed me and asked for my pass. I told 'em the niggers carried passes, but that I was a free-born American, and didn't need a pass to go any where upon airth. So I took no further notice of the whiskerandoes, till jist as I turn'd the next pint, what should I see but a mud fort, and a passel of sojers gettin' ready to fire into me. This looked squally, and I come to. They soon boarded me, and had my boat tied to a tree and my hands behind my back before you could whistle. I told the boy that was with me to stick by and see that nothing happened to the cargo, and off I went to prison; nothing but a log-prison, but strong as thunder, and only a trap-door in the roof. So there I was, in limbo, tucked up pretty nice. They gi'n me nothing to eat but stale corn bread and pork rinds; not even a pickle to make it go down. I think the days was squeez'd out longer, in that black hole, than ever they was in Greenland. But there's an end to most everything, and so there was to that. As good luck would have it, the whiskerando governor came along down the river and landed at the village, and hearin' of the Yankee, (they call'd me a Yankee 'cause I was clear white,) hearin' that there was a Yankee in the man-trap, he order'd me before him. There he jabber'd away, and I jabber'd as fast as he did; but he was a gentleman, and gentlemen is like free-masons, they can understand each other all over the world. So the governor let me go, and then he and the dons that were with him, walk'd down with me to my craft, and gave me to understand they wanted to buy some o' my fixins. So I roll'd 'em out a barrel of flour, and flung up a passel of bacon, till they made signs there was enough, and then the governor he pull'd out his gold-netted purse to pay me. I laughed at him for thinkin' I would take pay from one that had used me so well; and when he laid the money upon a box slily, I tied it up in an old rag and chucked it ashore to him after I pushed off; so he smil'd and nodded to me, and Peleg and I we

took off our hats and gi'n him a rousin' hurrah, and I thought that was the last I should see on him. But lo and behold! when I got to New Orleans, there was my gentleman got there before me, and remitted all government costs and charges, and found buyers for my perduce and my craft, and like to have bought me too. But I lik'd the bush, so I took my gun and set off afoot through the wilderness, and found my way home again, with my money all safe. When I come to settle with the Yankees, there was a good slice for me and mother, so I come off to buy a tract in the Michigan. I come streakin' along till I got to the Huron river, and undertook to swim that with my clothes on and my money tied round my neck. The stream was so high that I come pretty near givin' up. It was 'pull devil, pull baker,' with me, and I was glad to ontie my money and let it go. That was before these blessed banks eased a fellow of his money so slick, and you had to carry hard cash. So mine went to the bottom, and it's there yet for what I know. I went to work choppin' till I got enough to buy me an eighty; and I bought and sold fourteen times before I could get a farm to suit me; and like enough may try again before I die."

"But you were going to tell me about this hole."

"Oh, the hole! yes—that 'ere hole! You see, when I first settled, and the Indians was as thick as snakes, so that I used to sleep with my head in an iron pot for fear they should shoot me through the logs, I dug that hole and fix'd it just right for 'em, in case they came prowlin' about in the night. I laid a teterin' board over it, so that if you stepped on it, down you went; and there was a stout string stretch'd acrost it and tied to the lock of my rifle, and the rifle was pointed through a hole in the door; so whoever fell into the hole let off the rifle, and stood a good chance for a sugar-plum. I sot it so for years and never caught an Indian, they're so cunning; and after they'd all pretty much left these parts, I used to set it from habit. But at last I got tired of it and put up my rifle at night, though I still sot my trap; and the very first night after I left off puttin' the rifle through the hole, who should come along but my own brother from old Kentuck, that I hadn't seen for twenty year! He went into the hole about the slickest, but it only tore his trowsers a little; and wasn't I glad I hadn't sot the rifle?"

CHAPTER II.

Ragion? tu m'odii; ecco il mio sol misfatto.
ALFIERI.

OLD Brand's hatred of the Indians had not always expended itself in words. When war in its worst shape ravaged the frontiers, there were, besides those regularly commissioned and paid to destroy, many who took the opportunity of wreaking personal wrongs, or gratifying that insane hatred of the very name of Indian, which appears to have instigated a portion of the original settlers. These were a sort of land privateers;—the more merciless and inhuman that their deeds were perpetrated from the worst and most selfish impulses, and without even a pretence of the sanction of law. We may look in vain among the horrors of savage warfare for any act more atrocious, than some of those by which the white man has shown his red brother how the Christian can hate.

The achievement of which the old trapper boasted loudest was the burning of an Indian wigwam. He would recount, with circumstantial minuteness, every item of his preparation for the murderous deed; the stratagem by which he approached the place unobserved: and the pleasure that he felt when he saw the flames curling round the dry bark roof on four sides at once. He laughed when he told how the father of the family burst through the pile of burning brush which barricaded the only door, and how he was shot down before he had time to recognise his cruel enemy. Then the agonized shrieks of the women and children; their fleeing half naked and half roasted into the forest; and the mother and babe found dead in the path the next day,—these were never-failing topics; and, strange to say, old Brand, though not born a fiend, could exult in the recollection of such exaggerated wickedness. War, the concentrated essence of cruelty and injustice, gave the opportunity, and some wrong, real or pretend-

ed, committed by the red man, the excuse; and the outrage was only remembered as one of the incidental horrors of a border contest.

As Richard Brand became more infirm, his garrulity seemed rather to increase, and his grand-daughter, who was his constant attendant, used to sit for hours drinking in his wild stories, and imbibing unconsciously, something of the daring and reckless spirit of the reciter. She grew up to be a tall, majestic-looking girl, with the eye of Sappho herself; proud and high-spirited, impatient of control, and peculiarly jealous of any assumption of superiority in others; yet capable of attachment of the most ardent and generous kind to those from whom she experienced kindness and consideration. With these qualities she became an object of a good deal of interest in the neighbourhood, and none the less that her grandfather was known to have saved property enough to be accounted rich where all are nearly alike poor.

Julia Brand had just completed her fourteenth year when her aged relative failed suddenly; as people who have led rough lives are apt to do; and his mind and body became so much enfeebled that it was thought advisable to remove him to the vicinity of more competent aid in case of illness, as well as to more comfortable shelter than the old shingled hive could now afford. More than one offer was made by the neighbours, and the old man, though seeming at first scarcely to understand or accede to the plan, yet showed a gleam of his former acuteness by making choice voluntarily of Allen Coddington's house as his future home.

This Coddington was a man whose early advantages had been such as to place him far above the ordinary class of settlers in point of intelligence and ability. He was an industrious and thriving farmer, whose education, begun at one of the best New England academies, had been furthered by a good deal of solid reading, and made effective by a habit of observation without which reading can be of but little practical utility. He stood decidedly in the first rank among the citizens of his town and county. He was among the earlier adventurers in that region, and, having had the wisdom or the forethought, during the time of extravagant prices, when producers were few and consumers many, to bestow his whole attention on raising food for the gold-

hunters, who forgot to plough or to plant, and yet must eat, he had turned the speculating mania to good account, and become comparatively wealthy. His house was ample in size, and well provided with ordinary accommodations, and his farm presented the somewhat rare spectacle (in new country experience,) of a complete supply of every thing requisite for carrying on business to the best advantage.

Whether Allen Coddington was naturally of a self-satisfied and exclusive temper, or whether he had become somewhat overbearing through success and prosperity, or whether his good fortune, and that alone, had had the effect of rendering him an object of jealousy and ill-will,—he was certainly no favourite in his neighbourhood. He had a certain influence, but it was that which arises from a sense of power, and not from a feeling of confidence and attachment. People found his advice valuable, but they complained that his manner was cold and unsympathizing; and they remembered the offence long after the benefit was forgotten. Mr. Coddington's family were still less liked than himself, in consequence of their retired habits, which were supposed to argue a desire to keep themselves aloof from the society about them.

To one man in particular the whole house of Coddington was an object of the bitterest hatred and envy. This man was their nearest neighbour; a person of violent passions, and an ambitious and designing mind, capable of almost any extreme of malignity, when his pride was hurt, or his favourite objects thwarted. Blanchard was not habitually an ill-tempered man. He had often proved himself capable of great kindness towards those whom he liked; but he belonged to a class emphatically termed good haters—a dreadful anomaly in this erring world, where every man stands so much in need of the forbearance and kindness of his fellow man. Whoever had the misfortune to excite his vindictive feelings was sure of a life-long and uncompromising enmity; and though prudence might restrain him from overt acts, yet he was not above many mean arts and secret efforts to lower those against whom he had conceived any dislike.

To such a man as Blanchard the peaceful and softening counsels of an amiable and judicious wife would have been invaluable. Many a ruthless and violent character is kept within

bounds by a gentle influence, which is not the less powerful for being exerted in a manner unperceived by all but the person most interested; perhaps unacknowledged even by him. Blessed, indeed, are such peace-makers, and all who belong to them! But Mrs. Blanchard was a spirit of another tone. Wholly uneducated, both in mind and heart; tormented with a vague and vulgar ambition to be *first*, without reference to means or ends; and especially jealous of the pretence to superior delicacy and refinement, which she conceived to be implied in the quiet and secluded habits of Mrs. Coddington and her children—this woman's soul was consumed with bitterness; and her ingenuity was constantly exercised to discover some means of pulling down what she called the *pride* of her neighbours;—a term with which we sometimes deceive ourselves, when in fact we mean only their superiority.

As was the accusation of witchcraft in olden times—a charge on which neither evidence, judge nor jury, was necessary to condemn the unfortunate suspected,—so with us of the West is the suspicion of pride—an undefined and undefinable crime, described alike by no two accusers, yet held unpardonable by all. Once establish the impression that a man is guilty of this high offence against society, and you have succeeded in ruining his reputation as a good neighbour. Nobody will ask you for proof; accusation is proof. This is one of the cases where one has no right to be suspected. The cry of "Mad dog!" is not more surely destructive.

This powerful engine was put in operation by the Blanchard family, into every member of which the parental hatred of the Coddingtons had been instilled. They made incessant complaints of the indignities which they suffered from the *pride* of people whose true offence consisted in letting them alone, until the whole neighbourhood had learned from them to look upon the Coddingtons as covert enemies.

When Richard Brand made choice of the great house as an asylum for himself and Julia, he unconsciously gave yet another tinge of bitterness to the hatred of the Blanchards. They had been among the most urgent of the inviters, and they felt the preference given to their detested neighbour as a new insult to their own pretensions. We have said that old Brand had shown

a glimmering of his ancient sagacity in the decision. The establishment to which he was removed was one of extreme regularity, industry and order; the Blanchards were known to be careless, wild, passionate, and rather thriftless people; whose business was done by violent efforts at intervals, instead of habitual application and method. Their children were ill-governed, and their eldest son bore a character which was by no means to be coveted, although he maintained an exterior of decency, and even affected with some success the manners of a squire of dames.

Martha Coddington was a sweet, gentle girl; lovely in appearance and manners, and in all respects a most desirable companion for Julia, whose education had not been such as was calculated to endow her with all the feminine graces, although she was far from being deficient in the stronger and more active qualities which are no less valuable if something less attractive. Martha was in very feeble health, and confined almost entirely to sedentary occupations; and she had thus enjoyed opportunities for mental cultivation which would scarcely have fallen to her rustic lot if she had been blest with full health and strength. It was partly with a view to constant companionship for this beloved daughter, that Mr. Coddington had been induced to offer a home to Richard Brand. The old man himself was becoming almost a nonentity, and Julia had that indescribable something about her which attracts the attention and awakens interest without our being able to define satisfactorily the source of the fascination. Her manners were singularly simple, child-like and trustful: while her eye had a power and her step a firmness which betokened her ability to judge for herself, and to read the thoughts of others. She was as yet almost totally undeveloped; but it was impossible not to perceive at a glance that there was abundance of material, either for good or evil, as after circumstances might sway the balance of her destiny.

Once established in Mr. Coddington's family, Julia enjoyed all the privileges of a daughter of the house, and shared with Martha, and one or two younger children, the occasional instruction of the parents. Her quickness of apprehension was remarkable; and the activity of her habits and the cheerfulness of her temper

made her a valuable assistant to Mrs. Coddington in the various departments of householdry which would have fallen to Martha's share if she had been stout like the rest. So that the arrangement was one of mutual advantage, and the evening of Richard Brand's life bid fair to be as calm as its morning had been boisterous.

The Blanchards made many attempts at something like intimacy with Julia, but these were quietly discouraged by her protectors, probably from a sincere belief that such association would be unprofitable for her. They were at this time not at all aware of the deep enmity of the Blanchards, although they had not been blind to various indications of ill-will. So, in silence and secrecy grew this baleful hatred! as the deadly nightshade becomes more intensely poisonous when sheltered from the sun-light and the breeze. Imagination is the most potent auxiliary of the passions. Nothing so effectually moderates personal dislike as personal intercourse. Any circumstance which had thrown these neighbouring families into contact, in such a way as to bring into action the good qualities of either, would have done away with much of their mutual aversion. What a world of misery would thus have been spared to both!

CHAPTER III.

The undistinguish'd seeds of good and ill
  Heav'n in its bosom from our knowledge hides;
And draws them in contempt of human skill,
  Which oft for friends mistaken foes provides.
  * * * * * *
So the false spider, when her nets are spread,
  Deep ambushed in her silent den does lie;
And feels afar the trembling of the thread
  Whose filmy cord should bind the struggling fly.

DRYDEN.

NEARLY three years had Julia Brand passed in Mr. Coddington's family; years, for the most part, of quiet happiness and continual improvement. No care had been omitted by her kind friends to make her all that a woman should be; and Julia had imbibed instruction eagerly, and repaid all their efforts by her attachment and her increasing usefulness. To Martha she was as a dear younger sister, whose buoyant spirits had always the power to cheer, and whose kind alacrity could make even the disadvantages of ill-health appear less formidable. Yet the untamed quality of her earlier nature broke forth sometimes in starts of strange fierceness, which struck the gentle invalid with dismay. These flashes of passion almost always originated in some unpalatable advice, or some attempt at judicious control on the part of Mrs. Coddington, who had learned to feel a mother's love for the beautiful orphan; and, although such storms would end in showers of tears and promises of better self-government, they were a source of much grief to both Martha and her mother, who felt the dangers of this impetuosity when they reflected that no one but the imbecile grandfather possessed a natural right to direct the course of Julia's actions.

These, however, were but transient clouds. Peace and love reigned in this well-ordered household, and the old man, now re-

duced to absolute second infancy, received from the family all the attention that would have been due from his own children. Every fine morning saw his easy chair wheeled into the orchard, and there, in the pleasant shade, and with Julia at his side, he would hum fragments of his ancient ditties, or touch, with aimless finger, the old violin held up for him by Robert Coddington, a boy about Julia's age, who shared with her much of the care of her helpless charge. The old man's life was certainly prolonged by the circumstances of ease and comfort which attended its setting; to what good end, we might perhaps be disposed to inquire, were it not that he was, in his present condition at least, so like a human grasshopper, that we may suppose he was allowed existence on the same terms. His dependent state afforded certainly most ample opportunity for the exercise of kindly feeling in those about him; and we must believe this to be no unimportant object, since one part of the lesson of life is to be learned only by such means.

Julia, loved and cherished, full of ruddy health, and exalted by intellectual culture, opened gradually into splendid womanhood; her eye deepened in expression by a sense of happiness, and her movements rendered graceful by continual and willing activity. Even in the country, where such beauty and grace as hers are but little appreciated, she could not pass unnoticed. Though necessarily much secluded, both by the requisite attendance on her aged relative, and by the habits of the family of which she formed a part, her charms were a frequent theme with the young people of the neighbourhood, and it was sometimes said, half jest, half earnest, that the Coddingtons kept her shut up, lest she should "take the shine off their sickly daughter." The Blanchards in particular, took unwearied pains to have it understood that poor Julia was a mere drudge, and that all their own efforts to lighten the weary hours of their fair neighbour were repelled by her tyrants, who evidently feared that Julia might be induced to throw off their yoke if she should have an opportunity of contrasting her condition with that of other young persons. There seems to be in the forming stages of society, at least in this Western country, a burning, restless desire to subject all habits and manners to one Procrustean rule. Whoever ventures to dif-

fer essentially from the mass, is sure to become the object of unkind feeling, even without supposing any bitter personal animosity, such as existed in the case before us. The retired and exclusive habits of the Coddington family had centered upon them almost all the ill-will of the neighbourhood.

As a proof of this we may mention, that when a large barn of Mr. Coddington's, filled to the very roof with the product of an abundant harvest, chanced to be struck by lightning and utterly consumed, instead of the general sympathy which such occurrences usually excite in the country, scarce an expression of regret was heard. Mr. Blanchard, who was not averse to "making capital" of his neighbour's misfortunes, declared his solemn belief that this loss was a judgment upon the Coddingtons, and one which their pride richly deserved. He even went so far, in private, before his own family, as to wish it had been the house instead of only one of the barns. The tone of feeling cultivated in that house may be judged by this specimen. Evil was the seed, and bitter the fruit it was destined to produce!

Mr. Coddington felt the loss as any farmer must; and he would still more keenly have felt the unkind sentiment of the neighbourhood if he had become aware of it. But he was on the point of revisiting his native State with his family; and in the bustle of preparation, and the anxiety that attended Martha's declining health, which formed the main inducement to the journey, the venomous whispers were unheard. He left home supposing himself at peace with all the world, always excepting his nearest neighbour, whose enmity had evinced itself in too many ways to pass unregarded.

Julia and her grandfather were left in possession of the house, with the domestics necessary to carry on the affairs of the farm; and she prepared for a close attention to the household cares, and a regular course of intellectual improvement, which should make the long interval of comparative solitude not only profitable, but pleasant. Mrs. Coddington had learned such confidence in Julia, that she scarcely thought it necessary to caution her as to her conduct during her absence. Far less did she exact a promise as to the long-settled point of free intercourse with the Blanchard family. She gave only the general advice which a mother's

heart suggests on such occasions, and bade farewell to her blooming pupil in full trust that all would go on as usual under Julia's well-trained eye.

But the Blanchard family, one and all, had settled matters far otherwise. The very first time that old Brand's chair was wheeled into the orchard after the departure of the Coddingtons, a bunch of beautiful flowers lay on the rude seat beneath the tree where Julia usually took her station. When she snatched it up with delight and wonder, she was still more surprised to find under it a small volume of poetry. Julia loved flowers dearly, but poetry was her passion; and she not only read it with delight, but had herself made some not ungraceful attempts at verse, which had elicited warm commendations from her kind protectors. Here was a new author, and one whose style gave the most fascinating dress to passionate and rather exaggerated sentiment. Julia's attention was enchained at once. When she first opened the volume her only feeling was a curious desire to know whence it had come; but when she had read a page she thought no more of this. The poetry to which alone she had been accustomed, was not only of a high-toned and severe morality, but of an abstract or didactic cast; calculated to quicken her perceptions of right, rather than to call forth her latent enthusiasm of character. Cowper and Milton, and Young and Pollok had fed her young thoughts. But here was a new world opened to her; and it was not a safe world for the ardent and unschooled child of genius, who found in the glowing picturings of a spirit like her own, a power which at once took prisoner her understanding, aroused her sensibilities, and lulled that cautious and even timid discrimination, with which it had been the object of her friends to inspire her. She finished the reading at a sitting, and as she returned to the house with her grandfather, the excitement of her imagination was such that the whole face of nature seemed changed. A new set of emotions had been called into play, and the effect was proportioned to the wild energy of her character. Poor Julia! she had tasted the forbidden fruit.

In the afternoon she repeated the pleasure; and it was only when she laid the volume under her pillow before she retired for the night, that the question as to the appearance of the book re-

curred to her. It surely could not have been any of the Blanchards, she thought; yet who else had access to the orchard, which divided the two domains? The next day solved the doubt.

Julia was sitting by the side of her charge, holding with one hand the old violin, and clasping in the other the source of many a fair dream, in the shape of the magic volume, when a step broke the golden meshes of her reverie. She looked up, and young Blanchard stood before her. She started and blushed, she knew not why, for she had seen the young man a thousand times with no other emotion than a vague feeling of dislike.

"Have you been pleased with the book my sisters took the liberty of sending you, Miss Brand?" he said; "they wished me to offer you another, knowing you were fond of reading."

Julia expressed her pleasure eagerly, and received the new volume with a thrill of delight; accompanied, however, with some misgiving as to the propriety of obtaining it just in that way.

Blanchard, encouraged by her manner, proceeded to say that his sisters would have brought the books themselves, if they had supposed a visit would be agreeable. Having accepted the civility in one shape, Julia felt that she could not decline it in another, and the invitation was given, and the visit made.

CHAPTER IV.

Virtue, and virtue's rest,
How have they perish'd! Through my onward course
Repentance dogs my footsteps! black Remorse
Is my familiar guest!
* * * * * *
Indelibly, within,
All I have lost is written; and the theme
Which Silence whispers to my thought and dream
Is sorrow still—and sin.

PRAED.

THE accomplishment of the first visit by the Blanchards was only the first step of a regular plan of attack. Each successive day witnessed successive advances; and the bewildering influence of poetry, music, and yet sweeter flattery, made rapid inroads upon Julia's prudence. Still she declined all invitations to visit at Mr. Blanchard's, knowing how disagreeable such a step would be to her absent friends; and the young man and his sisters found they had reached the limit of their power over her, before they had ventured upon any direct effort to alienate her from her protectors.

Whether they would have relinquished the attempt in despair we cannot tell, for the depths of malice have never yet been sounded; but a new and potent auxiliary now appeared, who all unconsciously favoured their plans by attracting Julia's attention in a remarkable degree. This was a young clergyman—a nephew of Mrs. Blanchard's—who had injured his health by study, and had come to the country to recruit. He was a tall, well-looking young man, with no very particular attractions, except a pale face, dark, melancholy eyes, and a manner which betokened very little interest in anything about him. He spent his time principally in reading; but he played the flute very well, and was invited by the young Blanchards to join them in their visits to their pretty neighbour in the orchard.

This young clergyman, who had seen something of society, was not unobservant of Julia's beauty and talent; and although he does not appear to have had the slightest wish to interest her particularly, the silent flattery of his manner,—preferring her upon all occasions,—joined with his graceful person and delicate health, proved more dangerous to Julia than the direct efforts of his coarser relations. In short, he proved irresistible to Julia's newly excited imagination, and after that time the Blanchards found victory easy. Before many days Julia suffered herself to be led a willing visiter to the forbidden doors, conscious all the while that this was almost equivalent to a renunciation of her long-tried and still loved friends.

The main point being thus accomplished, the rest followed as of course. We are not able to trace step by step the process by which the Blanchards sought to root out from Julia's heart the love and reverence with which she regarded Mr. Coddington and his family; but sadly true it is that they succeeded in convincing her that far from having been benefited by their care, she had been secluded from all natural and proper enjoyments, and persuaded to become a family-drudge, under the specious veil of a desire for her improvement. A thousand reminiscences were called up by these designing people in order to find materials for mischief. Long-forgotten occurrences were cited and explained in such a way as to make it appear that the Coddingtons had for their own purposes deprived Julia of the acquaintance and sympathy of the neighbourhood. The seclusion in which she had grown up was represented as the fruit of a sordid desire to get as much household duty out of her as possible, while at the same time her beauty and talents were prevented from appearing to the disadvantage of the sickly Martha. These things cunningly insinuated were like "juice of cursed hebenon" in Julia's ears. In her days of calm and healthful feeling she would have scorned such vile constructions; but under such influences as we have described, and especially wrapt in the bewildering spell of a passion as violent as it was sudden, she was a transformed creature. Her virtue would have stood the test if her judgment had remained clear: but the opium-eater is not more completely the

victim of delusive impressions than such a character as hers when it is once abandoned to the power of love.

And this love—it carried shame in its very life, for was it not unsought? Had its object by word or even look evinced a preference for Julia? Burning blushes would have answered if we could have asked such questions of Julia herself. Indeed, this Mr. Milgrove was a young man of reserved and rather self-enclosed habits, who, feeling himself quite superior to the people among whom he found it convenient to remain for the time, had given himself very little concern as to the impression he was making. Thus was unlimited scope given to Julia's unpractised imagination. She idolized an idea. If the object who chanced to stand for an embodiment of her dreams had made love like a mere mortal, her naturally keen perception of character would have been awakened, and she would have become aware of a cold indifference of temperament in Milgrove, with which her own could never harmonize, and which would consequently have disgusted her. But such passion as hers does most truly "make the meat it feeds on," and in the exercise of this power its growth is portentous, and all independent of the real value of its material. It soon filled the heart of the unfortunate girl to the exclusion of all better sentiments.

Time flew by, until nearly two months had endowed Julia's delirium with the force of habit. Frequent letters from her absent friends had brought intervals of self-recollection and self-reproach; but the intoxication was too delicious; and with a sigh over the conscious disingenuousness, she wrote again and again without once mentioning her intimacy with the Blanchards or the presence of their relative. It is true, she tried to say to herself, that Mrs. Coddington had no right to control her movements; but hers was not a heart to satisfy itself with such fallacies. She felt deeply guilty, and she deliberately endured the dreadful load, for the sake of the dreams which attended it. Her fear now was the speedy return of her best friends. That must, as she well knew, put a stop at once to all intercourse with those malevolent neighbours, and deprive her of the sight of one to whom she had devoted her whole soul, unsought and unappreciated.

At length the period arrived when a letter from Mrs. Codding-

on announced that the family were about to return, travelling very slowly on account of Martha's sinking state, now more alarming than ever before. Julia's emotions on receiving this intelligence were of the most violent kind. She sat with the letter before her—her eyes fixed on the account given by the afflicted mother of the state of her dying child; and as she gazed, her mind may truly be said to have "suffered the nature of an insurrection." All her better self was roused by the thought of Martha's rapid decay, and a flood of tears attested the reality and the tenderness of her affection for this excellent friend; yet, on the other side, the fascinations of the past two months were present in all their power; and as she reflected that these must now be renounced, she groaned aloud, and grasped her throbbing temples with both hands, as if to preserve them during the agony of the struggle. In this condition she was found by one of the daughters of Mr. Blanchard, who had, by various arts, succeeded in gaining her confidence completely.

These young women, who were in every way inferior to Julia, derived all their interest in her eyes from their connection with the object of her mad attachment. She saw them as she saw him —through a medium of utter delusion. The elder, more particularly, was a designing and malicious girl, who hated Martha Coddington with a perfect hatred, and who had always assisted in fomenting the enmity which had arisen between the two families.

Julia's state of mind rendered her incapable of any disguise. Her passionate worship of the young clergyman had been a thing only suspected; but she now threw herself upon Sophia Blanchard's neck, and bewailed herself in the wildest terms, wishing for death to rid her of her misery, and declaring that she would not support an existence which had become odious to her. In the course of these frantic declarations, the whole history of her feelings came out, and Sophia, far from reasoning with her on the destructive effects of such self-abandonment, artfully condoled with her on being obliged to remain with the Coddingtons, and urged her to break with them at once, and remove with her grandfather to a home where she would find welcome and happiness.

But courage for this step was more than Julia could assume. She had suffered herself to receive unfavourable impressions of her

absent protectors, but her habitual reverence for them was such that she dared not think of braving their ill opinion. And besides, she well knew that the old man, childish as he was in many respects, could never be persuaded to the change. So she shook her head despairingly, and repeated her conviction that death alone could relieve wretchedness like hers.

Sophia Blanchard, bold and designing as she was, trembled at these words. She knew Julia well enough to believe that such feelings, acting upon such a spirit, might not improbably result in some rash act. Finding Julia resolute in her rejection of the expedient proposed, she set herself about contriving some other which should serve the double purpose of securing Julia and annoying the Coddingtons.

Are there moments when all guardian angels leave us at the mercy of the evil influences within? If it be so, such times are surely those when we have wilfully given the rein to passion, and avowed ourselves its slaves, to the scorn of that better principle which watches for us as long as we allow its benign sway. "Why hath Satan entered into thine heart?" Alas! do we not invite him? Poor Julia! his emissary is even now at thine ear!

Things too wild for fiction must yet find place in a real record of human actions. The plan which presented itself to the thoughts of Sophia Blanchard, was probably suggested by the bitter expressions she had heard under the parental roof; yet it was too outrageous to have been broached seriously by a person more advanced in age or better acquainted with the ordinary course of affairs. To set fire to Mr. Coddington's house after the family were asleep;—then to give the alarm, and remove the old man and such articles as could be saved—this was the diabolical advice which this ill-taught girl gave boldly to the wretched Julia, carefully keeping out of view the promptings of her own hereditary spite, and making it appear that the loss would be a matter of no vital importance to a man of Mr. Coddington's property, while it would set Julia free to remove at once to Mr. Blanchard's, where Mr. Milgrove had decided to remain for some time.

CHAPTER V.

Blessings beforehand—ties of gratefulness—
The sound of glory ringing in our ears—
Without, our shame; within our consciences—
Angels and grace—eternal hopes and fears.
Yet all these fences and their whole array
One cunning BOSOM-SIN blows quite away.

GEORGE HERBERT.

INSTEAD of rejecting this atrocious proposal with horror, as the Julia of purer days would have done, the unhappy girl listened in silence to all Sophia's baleful whispers, and with this tacit permission the whole plan was gradually developed; Sophia's ready ingenuity devising expedients to obviate each objection as it presented itself, till all was made to appear easy of accomplishment, and secure from detection. Still Julia did not speak. She sat with glazed eyes fixed upon her tempter, and not a muscle moved, whether in approval or rejection of the plan. Frightened by her ghastly face, Sophia Blanchard took her hand: it was cold and clammy as that of a corpse. Thinking Julia about to faint, she ran for water, and was about to use it as a restorative, when her victim, rousing herself, put it back with a motion of her hand.

"Enough, Sophia," she said; "no more of this now; leave me to myself! Go—go—no more!" and no entreaties could induce her to say one word as to her acceptance of the proposition upon which her adviser had ventured. Sophia Blanchard was obliged to return home in no very easy state of mind, and all her efforts to obtain admittance again proved fruitless. Julia resolutely refused to see any one of the family.

Three days passed in this sort of suspense—an ominous pause, and one which gave Sophia ample time to reflect on the step she had taken, and to consider its consequences. The old man went not forth to his place in the orchard. He sat whimpering in the

corner, scolding at Julia's laziness, and wishing that Robert Coddington would come back, that he might have somebody to take care of him. Julia, stern and silent, moved about the house with more than her usual activity, regulating matters which had of late been less carefully attended to than usual, and insisting upon extra efforts on the part of the domestics, in order that every thing might be in order for the reception of the family. On the evening of the third day all was pronounced ready, and the morrow was talked of as the time for the probable arrival.

At midnight a loud knocking and shouting at Mr. Blanchard's doors announced that a fire had broken out; and at the same moment a broad sheet of flame burst from the further end of Mr. Coddington's house. The neighbourhood was soon aroused, and all the efforts that country resources allow, were used to save the main body of the building. Meanwhile, old Brand was carried, in spite of his angry struggles and repeated declarations that he would not go, to Mr. Blanchard's, and laid on a bed in one of the lower rooms, Julia herself superintending the removal with solicitous care. This done, she took the lead in bringing out from the blazing pile, everything of value; herself secured Mr. Coddington's papers, and suggested, from her knowledge of the affairs of the family, what might best engage the attention of the assistants. Most of the effects were thus placed in safety; but with scanty supplies of water, and nothing more effectual than buckets, the attempt to preserve any part of the house was soon discovered to be hopeless. The neighbours, having done their best, were obliged to withdraw to some distance, where they could only stand and gaze upon the flames, and listen to their appalling roar.

It was during this pause that the general attention was called by the most agonizing shrieks, and Julia, who had been all composure during the agitation of the night, was seen coming from Mr. Blanchard's in a state of absolute distraction. She had hastened from the fire to look after her helpless charge, but on reaching the bed on which he had been placed, she found it empty and cold. A blanket that had been wrapped round him lay in the path through the orchard, and the conviction had struck Julia at once, as it did the minds of all present, that the old man, feeble

as he was, had, with the obstinacy of dotage, taken the opportunity when all were engrossed with the fire, to return to his own chamber, now surrounded by flames. Julia darted towards the door of the burning dwelling, but she was forcibly withheld by the men present, who declared the attempt certain destruction. While she still struggled and shrieked in their arms, the whole roof fell in, and a fresh volume of flame went roaring and crackling up to the very stars. The old man was gone!—gone to his account, of which the midnight burning of the helpless formed so dread an item. And Julia—it is scarcely to be wondered at that she envied him his fate. We dare not attempt a picture of her condition.

The grey light of dawn began to chill the glare of the dying flames. The contrast produced a ghastly tint on all around, till the countenances of those who continued to watch the smouldering fire looked as if death, instead of only fatigue and exhaustion, was doing its work upon them. Julia, having resisted all entreaties of the Blanchards to go with them to their house, stood with fixed gaze, and rigid as a statue, contemplating the ruin before her; when the sound of approaching wheels was heard; and the dreary light disclosed the return of the unfortunate family, not with one carriage only, as they left home, but with two; and travelling at so slow a pace that it seemed as if they brought calamity with them in addition to that which awaited them at their desolate home.

"They are coming!" The whisper went round, and then an awe-struck silence pervaded the assembly. Julia's perceptions seemed almost gone, although she was denied the refuge of temporary insensibility. She had already suffered all that nature could bear, and a stupid calm had succeeded her agonizing cries. Yet she drew near the carriage which contained her friends, and cast her eyes eagerly around.

"Where is Martha?" she said, in a voice so altered, so hollow, that the hearers started.

Mrs. Coddington burst into tears, but could not speak. Her husband answered with a forced calmness, "Julia, my love, our dear Martha is at rest! We have brought home only her cold remains."

Julia uttered not a sound, but, tossing her arms wildly in the air, fell back, utterly lifeless, and in this state was carried to the house of one of the neighbours.

* * * * * * *

The funeral was necessarily hurried, for poor Martha had died two days before; so that the ruins of the home of her childhood were still smoking when the sad procession passed them on its way to the grave. Julia, recovered from that kind swoon, had made a strong effort to master her feelings, and to take some part in the last duties, but so violent had been the action of the over-tasked nerves, that she was feeble and faint, and utterly incapable of the least exertion. No vestige of the old man's body could be found among the ruins, so that she was spared the vain anguish of so horrible a sight; yet the reality could have been scarcely more dreadful than the picturings of her own guilt-quickened fancy. She shrunk from joining, according to the custom of the country, in the funeral solemnities of her friend, and passed the dread interval alone in her chamber.

When the bereaved parents returned to the house, Mrs. Coddington went immediately to Julia.

"My daughter!" she said, "my dear—my *only* daughter! what should I be now without you! You must take the place of the blessed creature who is gone!" And she threw herself sobbing upon Julia's bosom, clasping her in her arms, and bestowing upon her all the fulness of a mother's heart.

Like a blighted thing did the wretched girl shrink from her embrace, and sinking prostrate on the floor at her feet, pour out at once the whole shameful story of her guilt. Not a shade was omitted, not even the unsought and frantic love which was now loathsome in her own eyes, nor the suspicions of Mr. and Mrs. Coddington which had been instilled into her heart until its very springs were poisoned.

Mrs. Coddington shook like an aspen leaf. She tried to speak —to ask—to exclaim—but words came not from her paralyzed lips. At length—"Julia!" she faltered out,—"Julia—are you mad? You cannot surely mean, my child—you *cannot* mean all this! You cannot intend me to believe that you are the—"

She stopped, for Julia, still prostrate, groaned and shuddered,

deprecating by a motion of her hand, any recapitulation of the horrors she had disclosed.

"It is true," she said; "I am all that I have told you; I have burned your dwelling, so long my happy home; I have committed murder,—all I ask now is punishment. I have thought of all; I am ready for what is to follow; I wish for the worst; make haste, for I must die soon,—very soon!"

She concluded so wildly, and with such an outburst of agony that Mrs. Coddington again thought her mind had become unsettled by the dreadful occurrences of the last few hours.

But these tears somewhat relieved her, and she was comparatively calm after the paroxysm had subsided. And now, in a collected manner, and in the presence of Mr. Coddington, did she firmly repeat all that she had said, gathering courage as she proceeded, and anxiously entreating to have her statement taken down in legal form.

Mr. Coddington, once convinced that there was a dreadful reality in all this, felt it as any other man would; but he treated it with a calmness and forbearance which not every man could have commanded. He heard Julia's statement through, asked some questions as to certain particulars, and then, taking her hand with his old air of fatherly kindness, he said, "My poor child! you have been dreadfully deluded! Those who have led you astray have much to answer for, and I shall take care that they do not escape the reckoning. You I can forgive. The mental sufferings you must endure are atonement enough; but for those who wilfully poisoned your young mind—"

"Oh no—no!" exclaimed Julia; "no one is to blame but myself. I alone am answerable for my crime! I did all with my own free will—out of my own wicked heart! And oh! how I wish this wretched heart were cold and still, even now! How I envy dear Martha her peaceful grave! Make haste and take down what I have said, for I *cannot* live!"

"Julia!" said Mr. Coddington, interrupting her, with an air of severity very different from his former manner, "do you wish me to believe that all your expressions of remorse and self-abasement are false and hollow? What do you mean? That you would raise your hand against your own life? Rash girl! your thoughts

are impious. Suicide is not the resource of the true penitent, but of the proud and self-worshipping hypocrite. If you are sincere in your desire to atone for the injury you have done me, show it by entire submission to what I shall see fit to direct. You know me; you know you have no reason to dread harshness at my hand. Be quiet then; command yourself, and to-morrow I will talk with you again."

So saying he left the room, seeing Julia too much exhausted for further conference, but Mrs. Coddington remained long with her, soothing her perturbed spirit by every thing that a mother's love could have suggested, and assuring her of Mr. Coddington's kindness and of his forgiveness. "You have already suffered enough, my poor child," said this kind-hearted woman; "now go to rest, pray for pardon and for peace, and fit yourself by a quiet night for the duties of to-morrow."

And such friends Julia had been persuaded to believe harsh and unsympathizing!

We shall not venture to give a fictitious conclusion to this story of real life. It might not be difficult to award *poetical* justice; but neither that nor any other was the result of Mr. Coddington's efforts. He adhered firmly to his resolution of holding Julia's advisers answerable for what she had done. She was not yet sixteen, and her account of all that had passed during the absence of her friends plainly showed a conspiracy on the part of the Blanchard family to do him a deep injury. Slanderous fabrications of the vilest character had been employed to prejudice Julia against her benefactors. She had been urged to treacherous and injurious conduct; persuaded that Mr. Coddington was planning to possess himself of her property, on her grandfather's death; and frequently reminded that whatever injury should be done to the Coddingtons, would be considered as no worse than they merited; in attestation of which the sentiment of the neighbourhood on the occasion of the burning of the barn, was frequently cited. On the whole, Mr. Coddington, who was a man of strong and decided character, was fully of opinion that he had just cause of complaint against Blanchard, as answerable not only for his own share of these misdemeanours, but for those which his family, by his instigation, had carried more fully into

practice. He refused, therefore, to listen to Julia's entreaties, that she alone might bear the burthen of her crime, and proceeded to seek redress from his malicious neighbour.

His first care was to obtain an interview with Mr. Blanchard, and endeavour to induce him to make reparation and acknowledgment, from a sense of justice. But this course, however accordant with the sound principles of the injured party, was wholly lost upon the virulent enmity of his opponent. Blanchard, who did not believe in Julia's deep repentance, treated his neighbour's remonstrances with scorn and derision. He heaped abuse and insult upon Mr. Coddington, telling him that it was well known that his premises had been insured beyond their value, and more than suspected that the fire had been a matter of his own planning, in order that the insurance money might help to build a more modern house. He said, as to Julia, that the young men of the neighbourhood had resolved to release her by force, in case she was not given up peaceably, since she was believed to be detained against her will. In short, this bold, bad man, strong in the knowledge that the prejudices of the country, (so easily awakened on the subject of *caste*,) had been thoroughly turned against the Coddington family, defied him with contempt, and left nothing unsaid that could exasperate his temper.

Mr. Coddington now resolved to appeal to the laws, his last resort against this determined enmity. That Blanchard was morally accountable he felt no doubt; to render him legally so, he thought required only that the fact should be plainly set forth to a jury. The ends of justice seemed to sanction if they did not require such a course; since it is always desirable to ascertain what protection the laws do really afford to those who give them their support. He probably thought this necessary also on Julia's account; for her dread secret was in possession of the declared enemies of the family; and a judicial investigation, by showing the influence under which she had acted, would place the matter in its true light, and set forth the palliation with the crime. So the matter was laid before the grand jury.

It might, perhaps, be inquiring too curiously, to ask whether, in coming to this conclusion, Mr. Coddington did not consult his passions rather than his judgment. It is difficult to know exactly

how much love we bear to abstract justice. That another course would better have promoted both his happiness and his pecuniary interests, is highly probable; since it is at least as true in a new country, as elsewhere, that the law is a great gulf which is apt to swallow up both parties. Yet the desire to appeal to public justice was at all events a natural, if not a prudent one.

But a grand jury, though sworn to "diligently inquire and a true presentment make" of such matters as the foregoing, and that "without fear, favour, or affection," are far from being above prejudice, and, perhaps, not always secure from influences likely to obstruct the even flow of justice. When the matter is not a "foregone conclusion," a judgment prejudged,—it too often happens that the story first told has the advantage. There is no room for more than one set of ideas on the same theme. The prominent and tangible fact in this case was, that a young girl confessed having burned a house; this might bring her to the penitentiary, and the jury would not find a "true bill." In vain did the deeply penitent Julia make her statement in presence of the court. She was represented as under compulsion. She was taken aside again and again, at the repeated instigation of Blanchard, as if, like prince Balak, he still hoped "peradventure *she* will curse me them from thence;"—but although her story was unaltered, it remained unheeded. She was now offered half the homes in the neighbourhood, and repeatedly reminded that she was under the protection of the court, and could go where she liked; but she insisted on remaining with Mr. Coddington, and declared that she desired life only that it might be spent in atoning the injury she had done him. Foiled, as we have seen, in his attempt to make the shame and the punishment due to so great an offence fall on those whom he considered most guilty, Mr. Coddington's next thought was to vindicate his own character from the boundless calumnies of his envious neighbour. But a better consideration of the case determined him to let his reputation clear itself; trusting that the past and the future would alike be his vouchers to all those whose opinion he valued. So he contented himself with having placed Julia in comparative safety, and resolved to live down the calumnies which had been so industriously propagated against him. Instead of quitting the neigh-

bourhood, as a man of weaker character might have done, he has rebuilt his house, and adopted Julia as his daughter, fully convinced of the change in her character, as well as of the violent mental excitement under which she yielded to temptation; and if there be any truth in the doctrine of compensations, it cannot be doubted that a man of his character must, in time, obtain a complete though silent triumph over the desperate malignity of such people as the Blanchards.

THE END.

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WILDERNESS AND THE WAR PATH.

BY JAMES HALL,

AUTHOR OF

LEGENDS OF THE WEST, BORDER TALES, SKETCHES OF THE WEST,
NOTES ON THE WESTERN STATES, ETC., ETC.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
The Black Steed of the Prairies,	1
The War Belt, a Legend of North Bend,	32
The New Moon, a Tradition of the Omawhaws,	43
The Red Sky of the Morning,	83
The Capuchin,	112
The Dark Maid of Illinois,	117
The Indian Hater,	138
Pete Featherton,	152
Appendix,	169

THE WILDERNESS AND THE WAR PATH.

THE BLACK STEED OF THE PRAIRIES.

A TALE OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

THE life of the American Indian is not so destitute of the interest created by variety of incident, as might be supposed by a casual observation of the habits of this singular race. It is true that the simple structure of their communities, and the sameness of their occupations, limit the Savage within a narrow sphere of thought and action. Without commerce, agriculture, learning, or the arts, and confined to the employments of war and hunting, the general tenour of his life must be monotonous. His journies through the unpeopled wilderness, furnish him with no information as to the modes of existence of other nations, nor any subjects for reflection, but those which nature supplies, and with which he has been familiar from childhood. Beyond his own tribe, his intercourse extends only to savages as ignorant as himself, and to traders but little elevated above his own moral standard.

But there are, even in savage life, seasons of great excitement, and instances often occur in which individuals are drawn into adventures of the most singular and perilous description. The state of war is prolific of those chances and changes which call forth the energies of individual character; and the chase, when pursued not merely for spot, but as a serious occupation, in wilds frequented for the same purpose by hostile bands, becomes really what the poet has described it,

"Mimicry of noble war."

The following legend exemplifies some of the accidents of this singular mode of existence, and shows the training, by which the Indian youth are prepared to encounter dangers, and achieve exploits, which would seem incredible to those who are unacquainted with the habits of that remarkable race.

Our scene lies in a region seldom visited by civilized men, and only known to us through the reports of the adventurous trappers who seek there the solitary haunts of the beaver, and of a few travellers of the more intelligent class, who have been led thither by scientific curiosity or missionary zeal. We stand upon the Eastern declivity of the Rocky Mountains, and see stretched before us the Great Plain, which extends thence to the frontier settlements of the United States. Around us are immense bulwarks of rock, towering towards the sky in all the gigantic magnificence of mountain scenery, while we see below us, in beautiful contrast, an interminable carpet of verdure, extending to the distant horizon. The rays of the morning sun have lighted up the mountain sides, and are reflected from peaks covered with snow, while the mists of the dawn are reposing upon the prairie, whose rich pastures display the luxuriance of the summer vegetation.

The Flatheads of the Rocky Mountains were encamped in one of the gorges of the Eastern declivity of that Ridge. The spot was wild and secluded, indicating the cautious habits of the people who had thus concealed their temporary residence in one of the most inaccessible spots of that inhospitable wilderness. It was a deep ravine, bounded on either side by parapets of solid rock, whose rugged peaks towering upward to an immense height, concealed and shaded the narrow glen, so as to wrap it in perpetual gloom. A strip of ground margining a small rivulet that leaped in a succession of cascades down the gorge, afforded a pathway accessible in most places for but a single horseman, but sometimes spreading out to a width sufficient to accommodate a small encampment.

In one of those nooks, which might have suited the ascetic fancy of a misanthrope who desired to separate himself from his species, the Flatheads had pitched the skin lodges, that formed their only habitation throughout the year. It was the village of a migratory people, habituated to sudden changes of residence,

and always ready to move at a moment's warning, with all their population and property. Their horses, whose rough coats showed continual exposure to the weather, were browsing upon the scanty herbage that grew along the banks of the rivulet; sentinels were posted in the defiles leading to the village and by which alone it could be approached, while a watchman perched like an eagle upon one of the tallest peaks, but concealed in the shadows of the grey rock, looked abroad upon the neighbouring plain, and upon the mountain passes, to give due notice of any approaching danger. Even the children, as they dabbled in the brook or climbed the precipices, seemed instinctively jealous of danger, throwing up their dark eyes, and silently exchanging glances, if an owl hooted, or a vulture sailing aloft threw his shadow in the glen; and the dogs, with slouched tails, pointed ears, and wild eyes, skulked about with the stealthy pace of the wolf.

These appearances, indicating a quick sense of surrounding danger, were characteristic of the habitual watchfulness of this band, who lived in continual terror of the Blackfeet, a tribe much more numerous than themselves, and noted as well for their predatory habits, as for the ruthless ferocity which marked their conduct towards their enemies. To the Flatheads especially they bore an irreconcilable hatred, which was indulged in an unremitting and unsparing warfare. There was a great disparity in numbers between the two tribes, the Flatheads being a very small band, while the Blackfeet were numerous, so that they never met on equal terms, and although their battles were often desperate, they were usually unsought by the weaker party. Both were wandering tribes, having no fixed boundaries or settled habitations, and deriving a precarious subsistence from the chase; but the Blackfeet were the banditti of the mountain country, a fighting, thieving, cut-throat nation, who made themselves formidable to all who fell in their way, and observed no rule of justice unless it was that of plundering alike the white man and the Indian, and being terrible equally to friend and foe—while the Flatheads were a fugitive people, pursued continually by their relentless enemies, whom they had no hope of escaping but by cunning and swiftness of foot.

The Flatheads are in many respects an interesting people.

Though inclined to peace, they are brave, and well trained in all the arts of war and the chase, and when compelled to turn upon their enemies, they fight with the desperation of men who expect no quarter, and often succeed in beating off a force greatly superior to their own. Few of the savage tribes exhibit such simplicity of character. Wretchedly poor—with no property but their horses and their arms, both of which are often lost in their sudden flights—and having no means of subsistence but the chase, which, precarious as it always is, is rendered more so, by the persecutions of their enemies, they are yet a hospitable people. The stranger always finds a welcome in their camp, and a share of their pittance of food. They are considered honest and inoffensive. The grasp of poverty, which often renders the heart callous, not only to the generous sympathies of our nature, but also to the simple obligations of good faith, has exerted no sinister influence upon the character of this tribe; nor has their unhappy state of peril, and watchfulness, and flight, rendered them mean or cruel. In all the moral qualities they rather excel than fall below the standard of savage character, and compare well with the tribes around them, in every thing but power. Perhaps if they were stronger they might be less virtuous.

The Arab and his graceful courser, are not more constant companions than the Flathead and his steed, in whose services he finds safety as well as convenience. "Snuffing the approach of danger in every tainted breeze," he throws himself upon the back of his horse, on the slightest alarm, and flies with the speed of the wild antelope of the prairies. He is fearless in his horsemanship, and manages that noble animal with surpassing grace and skill, even without the aid of rein or saddle, which he uses for convenience rather than necessity.

Among the exercises with which these Indians while away the few and far distant intervals of security, which may be devoted to manly sports, feats of horsemanship hold the highest rank. On such occasions it is not uncommon for a young Indian to exhibit his address, by mounting an untamed steed, just captured upon the plains where these noble animals run wild. The horse, perhaps the noble-spirited leader of a herd, whose strength and speed has long enabled him to set all pursuit at defiance, is brought to

the starting place properly bound, but without saddle or bridle. The rider mounts upon the bare smooth back of the sleek and nervous animal, holding in one hand a small flag attached to a short staff, and in the other a hoop covered with a dried skin, somewhat in the fashion of a tamborine. When firmly seated, the animal is turned loose, and dashing off, endeavours, by desperate plunges, to disengage himself from the resolute savage, who, clinging by his legs to the furious steed, retains his place in spite of every effort of the enraged animal to dislodge him. If in this contest of physical activity, the horse seems likely to gain the advantage, the rider throws the flag over his eyes, and tames his spirit by depriving him of light, at the same time terrifying the blinded animal, by striking him on the head with the sonorous hoop. With the latter also he changes the course of the horse by striking one side of the head or the other, and by a skilful use of both these simple aids, the subdued animal is brought back to the starting place, and again made to traverse the plain in any desired direction, until, worn down by fatigue and terror, he submits to the weaker but more intelligent being, who is destined to become his master.

Such is the tribe to whom the pale-faced stranger, in his pride, has given a name, not known to those who bear it, nor descriptive of any personal peculiarity existing among them, for the heads of the Flatheads are not flatter than those of their neighbours; neither have the Blackfeet, blacker feet than other Indians. We use these names, however, as we find them.

On the morning to which we have alluded, a party composed of the most effective men of the Flatheads, were preparing to hunt the buffalo upon the prairies. Their best horses having been selected, they were getting every thing in readiness for an expedition which might be extended to several weeks. The remainder of the band, with all the women and children, were in the meanwhile to retire still further into the recesses of the mountain, to remain concealed in its solitary glens, subsisting upon roots and herbage, and such small game as chance might throw in their way.

A curious observer of the workings of the human mind might have found rich materials for reflection, in the cheerfulness with

which all parties to this proceeding prepared for the approaching separation. It was probable that many of those who thus parted would meet no more. The noble sport of hunting the buffalo is not a thing to be done in a corner. The herd must be sought in the broad pastures, where the game is won by the fleet-footed horse, and the swift arrow. All concealment was to be thrown aside; the secret paths of the mountain, its nooks and hiding places, were to be abandoned, and the hunters were to ride forth in the light of day, upon a plain broad and level as the ocean. Like a little fleet of defenceless merchantmen, venturing upon a sea swarming with hostile cruisers, their best chance of escape lay in the possibility of passing unnoticed. Should they meet any of the numerous bands of the Blackfeet, who roved over the same plains, they must fly with scarcely a hope that all would escape, or fight with the certainty of being overmatched by superior numbers.

Nor was there more safety for those who remained in the mountains. Although so poor as to possess nothing to tempt the spoiler, their enemies pursued them with an eagerness for which it would be difficult to assign an adequate motive, to those who are unacquainted with the savage character, and who could scarcely understand how the mere lust of carnage, whetted by continual indulgence, becomes a master passion of the soul, irrespective of any desire for plunder or conquest, or of any present or prospective advantage. Neither infancy, nor imbecility, nor sex, affords any protection; as man bruises the head of the serpent, so does the Indian crush the offspring of his enemy; and the absence of the warrior only entices the brutal destroyer to seek his prey with redoubled diligence.

Yet with such perils lowering on every side, the Flatheads were apparently free from care. If they thought of the casualties which might sever the dearest ties, the reflection had lost the freshness, which gives poignancy to sorrow, and had become familiar by frequent contemplation. The men were pointing their arrows, or decorating their persons with paints and feathers; and the women were attending to their domestic employments, with as much tranquillity as if they, with their sons and husbands, had already passed through the dark valley of the shadow of death,

and were now resting in the happy hunting grounds of the spirit land.

Having made these explanations for the benefit of such of our readers as may not be familiar with the society and manners of the Aborigines, we proceed to the business of our story. At a spot where the waters of the rivulet had collected into a transparent pool, stood a young girl, who had just filled a skin with water, and was about to return with her burthen—for the young females of this nation, like the Hebrew maids of old, are employed in all the various offices of domestic labour, and strange as it may seem, to introduce a heroine thus engaged, our regard for the sacred obligations of truth, obliges us to state the fact, as we find it. It was Bachitucky, or the White Cherry Blossom, the daughter of the Peace Chief, the personage having the highest place of authority within the precincts of the village, and she excelled all the maidens of the village in stature and beauty. The superiority of her charms were universally admitted, and what was equally remarkable she understood her own advantages quite as well as others, and improved them by an attention to neatness and costume which was not usual even in the best circles of the Flatheads. As she turned from the pool, a youth stood before her, armed, but not painted, nor wearing any of the ornaments appropriate to the Indian warrior. He evidently sought an interview, which the girl did not seem to avoid, and both stood for a moment in silence. It was an awkward situation, as any gentleman will testify, who has found himself in the presence of his lady love, having something special to say, but wanting boldness to say it. She was the first to break silence, and laughed coquettishly, as she inquired:

"Why does Ishtakka stand in the way—has he anything to say to the White Cherry Blossom?"

"Not much," replied the youth, in the brief and pointed style of his people. "I have sought you in marriage and have been refused. For three days I hunted on the great plain, and at last killed a fine antelope, which I carried last night, as soon as it was dark, to the lodge of the Peace Chief. I laid it on the ground before the lodge, and retired a short distance, and seated myself on the ground, to watch whether my present would be accepted.

Bachitucky's mother passed out of the tent, and returned, but took no notice of the antelope. Then I knew that Ishtakka was considered as a dog, who was not worthy to marry the daughter of the Peace Chief."

"The Peace Chief does not know Ishtakka," rejoined the girl. "He has never seen him among the braves in the buffalo hunt, nor heard him recount his deeds at the war pole."

"I understand," replied the youth sarcastically—"Bachitucky is very beautiful, and her mother would marry her to a great chief. She is a wise mother."

"Ishtakka is a fool," said the girl; "every mother wishes her daughter to marry a man who can protect her, and hunt for her."

"I am as able to hunt as others," exclaimed Ishtakka vehemently. "There is not a brave in the nation that can ride better than I, unless it be Incillo, the war chief, who surpasses all men. I am not a coward. Whose fault is it that I have not struck an enemy? They say I am too young, and will not let me ride with the braves."

"If Ishtakka is too young to go to war, he is not old enough to marry."

"Very well; I will go to war. I will hang the scalp of a Blackfoot upon the war pole in the village. I will kill a buffalo, and bring the meat and the skin to the lodge of the Peace Chief. Then I will ask him again for his daughter."

"Now you speak wisely," replied the girl. "When you are mounted on a fine horse, with your face painted, your neck hung with the claws of the grisly bear, and your head dressed with the feathers of the war eagle, then the White Cherry Blossom will be glad. She will say the Master of Life has given Ishtakka a bold heart."

"And will you listen to me when I am counted among the braves?"

"I have no ears to listen to young men, when they speak of marriage," said the maiden, and then taking the knife from the belt of her suitor, she plucked a lock of her raven hair, and tying it firmly round the hilt, added, "When Ishtakka goes into battle, let him look at that lock of hair, and it will make him strong. The White Cherry Blossom cannot promise to be his wife, be-

cause she is the daughter of a chief who will give her to whom he pleases, but she will not marry willingly, until Ishtakka comes to claim her."

So saying, the maiden passed on, and Ishtakka went to seek the chief, Incillo. Now Incillo was the general, or war chief, of his nation, and in consequence of his abilities, and popularity, was in fact the ruler, whose word was law, though the Peace Chief, who was an old man, presided in the council, and was also called Father.

This leader having ascended to a commanding eminence, stood gazing over the plain that lay extended to the eastward of his retreat, scanning with practised eye, every dark spot, and every object that seemed to move upon the verdant surface. He was a man whose appearance would have pointed him out to a casual observer, as a ruling chief. Not tall, but muscular, his round compact form, and well-shaped limbs, exhibited those just proportions which combine strength with activity, and his bearing was that of the warrior. His countenance wore that expression of simplicity and benevolence, that so often characterizes the physiognomy of a man of superior intelligence, whose sagacity has elevated him above the prejudices of his time and country. Neither fear, nor hatred, nor any bad passion, was depicted upon his features, whose frank, but sedate and quiet character, was touched with a reflective cast, that indicated habits of thought, and the consciousness of responsibility. However reckless his followers might be, he was evidently one whose well-balanced mind was awake to the duties and circumstances of his station. The patriarch of his people, he discharged the office with the kindness and vigilance of the parent, tempered with the severe authority of the chief. He was a hospitable man, and such was the frankness of his manners, that the stranger was at once impressed with confidence in his good faith; while his cheerfulness, his fondness for the athletic sports of his people, and his intelligence, made him an agreeable companion.

Retired from his people, the chief was reconnoitering the surrounding country, and revolving in his mind the plan of the projected march, when Ishtakka stood before him—a tall lad who

had attained the height of manhood, while his form and address were those of the boy.

The chief briefly asked the purport of his visit.

"I am no longer a boy," was the reply, "I wish to go with the braves to hunt the buffalo."

"Those who go to hunt on the great plain," replied the chief, "may chance to fall in with the Blackfeet, and instead of killing buffalo, will be obliged to fight in defence of their lives."

"It is well," replied the youth, "Ishtakka is not afraid."

"I should hope that Ishtakka does not know what it is to be afraid. But there is something more than courage required, to make a hunter and a brave."

"I can ride the wild horse that has just been caught," replied the youth, "and when at full speed I can hit the antelope with my arrow."

"That is well," said the chief, "but the brave who follows Incillo, must be wise and very prudent. He must be cunning and quick-sighted, expert in watching the arts of the enemy, and skilful in devising schemes to defeat them."

Ishtakka remained silent for a moment, and then said modestly, "These things I expect to learn from seeing them practised. If I follow the Great Chief, will I not be instructed by his example—for who is so wise as Incillo?"

The chief replied, "My son speaks wisely; it is a good way for the young men to learn by observing their elder brothers; but we do not trust any one to take upon himself the character of a brave until he has proved himself worthy. What has Ishtakka ever done? Has he ever struck a Blackfoot? Has he taken their horses? Have their women, when busied about the camp fire, heard his war-whoop breaking suddenly upon their ears, like the thunder of the great Manito?"

Ishtakka was abashed, and knew not what to reply to the great chief. After a pause, he said, "It is this that makes me ashamed. I have hitherto been a boy, and have associated only with children and women; I now feel strong, and wish to earn a name. I am willing to be tried. If my father will allow me to follow the braves to the great plain, he shall see whether I can use my arms like a man."

"It is well," replied the chief: "go, young man, and get ready."

Two days afterwards, the band of hunters, led by Incillo, were encamped upon the prairie, far from the place at which they had left their tribe, who had also removed in an opposite direction. The spot chosen for their hunting camp had little to recommend it. A small stream trickling along a ravine, and a copse, scarcely visible above the level of the plain, furnished water for the jaded horses, and a covert for temporary concealment, should danger appear in the distant perspective. At present, not an object was seen moving on the broad expanse—neither buffalo nor Blackfeet Indians. The hunters were occupied much after the fashion of any party of sportsmen, who find a poor lodging after a hard day's travel: some snored on the grass, some were examining the galled backs of their steeds, some repairing their weapons, a few were chewing some wretched remnants of jerked meat, and the remainder, though they uttered no complaints, exhibited in their looks the impatience and dejection of hungry men.

The chief, calling Ishtakka to him, walked apart from the band, and then addressed him as follows :*

"It is necessary for a youth to prove his manhood, before he can be permitted to associate with braves. He must show that he may be trusted, and that he is wise to contrive the means to do things that are difficult. I require of you a small matter; see that it be well done. To-night, when all are sleeping, separate yourself from the band, and return to the camp of our people. Enter it secretly, so that no one shall discover you. In the lodge of the Peace Chief, directly over the entrance, hangs a knife which he values highly as a present from Sublette, the great white trader; at the other end of the lodge is usually placed the pipe which the Peace Chief uses, when he invites his friends to a feast. Bring the knife and the pipe to me; and remember that all this must be done so secretly, that even the owl who looks out from his hiding place in the night, shall not see a form move, nor hear the sound of a footstep."

"But if I should be discovered—"

* See Appendix, No. I.

"Then you will have failed in what you undertook. The braves, if they suspect the truth, will laugh at you for attempting the exploit of a man, while you are yet a boy; if they do not find out that you returned by my permission, they will despise you as one who deserted a hunting party, that he might return home to steal—the Peace Chief will beat you for seeking to rob his lodge, the women will call upon you to carry their burthens, and the boys will say, there is one who is too lazy to hunt, and not smart enough to steal."

"And this my father calls a small matter."

"It is so, for one who has a bold heart, and a light foot."

"I will bring the knife and the pipe," said Ishtakka, "or else the great chief shall never see me again."

That night Ishtakka left the camp secretly, and took up his solitary journey towards the mountains. When he arrived within a few miles of the place where the tribe had been encamped, he abandoned his horse, and went forward with stealthy steps towards the camp ground, thinking it possible that their departure might have been delayed. As he approached the spot with cautious steps, warily listening to catch any sound that might float on the air, and throwing watchful glances in every direction, he espied the fresh mark of a horse's foot upon the ground. He stopped, and looked around with intense anxiety, not daring to move lest the echo of his own footstep should betray him. All was still. He advanced a few steps, carefully examining the ground, which was hard and stony, and was enabled by his native cunning and keen eye, to ascertain that several horses had passed recently towards the place of encampment. Uncertain what course to pursue, he paused to consider. The tracks might be those of stray animals seeking their former home, or of stragglers from his own tribe, or of enemies pursuing the Flatheads to their new retreat. In the latter case there was danger to the tribe, while he stood personally in immediate and imminent peril. Even at that moment, the keen eye of a Blackfoot scout might be resting upon him, the bow might be bent to send an arrow to his heart; whichever way he turned, he might step into an ambush prepared for him. But he scorned to retreat, and the idea of abandoning the adventure entered not his head. Another step brought him to a

projecting angle of the rock, which concealed the site of the late camp, and peeping cautiously from behind this buttress, he discovered that his people had deserted the spot. Not a vestige of the village remained; but as his eye scanned the scene, in search of some object which might convey intelligence on the subject now uppermost in his thoughts, it fell suddenly on a group whose appearance chilled him to the heart. Under the shadow of the same projection against which he leaned, and but a few yards distant from him, sat half a dozen Blackfoot warriors, decorated with war paint, and fully armed, while their jaded horses, with heads and tails drooped, stood panting around them. They looked like men who had performed a forced march, upon some secret enterprise, and whose thoughts were even now intent upon striking a sudden blow.

One glance satisfied the shuddering youth, who shrunk back, and began to retire silently from a spot fraught with dangers so appalling. Regulating his flight with caution and presence of mind, he stepped so lightly that not an echo rose from his stealthy tread. He soon began to breathe more freely. His courage rose, and while he reflected upon the most prudent means to avoid the danger that threatened himself, he began also to think whether he might not turn this accident to advantage, by averting the blow which threatened his tribe. He resolved to make the attempt, and being intimately acquainted with the passes of the mountain, in that neighbourhood, began to ascend the precipice. It was not difficult for one so young and active, to gain the height, and he soon was perched upon an overhanging crag, immediately over the spot where the Blackfeet were seated, watching their motions, and longing with all the avidity of his race for some means to annoy or alarm them. While thus situated, he chanced to place his foot upon a large fragment of rock, which yielded to the pressure; a sudden thought struck him, and stooping down, he succeeded in shoving it from its place. Down went the mass, rebounding from crag to crag, crushing the bushes that impeded its way, and falling in the valley with a loud crash. Upon the first alarm, the Indian warriors started up, and sprung upon their horses; at the same instant, terrific yells assailed their ears, from various directions, for Ishtakka had no sooner despatched his mis-

sile, than he uttered a succession of loud and long whoops, which repeated by a hundred echos, fell upon the valley like the battle cry of a host. The enemy waited not to ascertain the cause, or the magnitude of the danger, but urging their horses to full speed, scampered down the valley in the greatest panic.

Ish-tak-ka laughed at the discomfiture of the Blackfoot warriors, and considered this happy relief from a danger so threatening, an omen of the most auspicious promise; for the Indian believes the result of every adventure to depend as much on good fortune, as on good conduct, and is applauded for success, without much regard to the means by which it is obtained. And he went forward rejoicing in the conviction that he was a lucky man.

Again he resumed his solitary way up the glen, in search of his people, seeking for their trail upon the ground, and using every possible vigilance to conceal himself from any stragglers who might be loitering in the valley, as well as from the watchmen that should be posted on the heights. His progress was slow and painful, but patience and perseverance are cardinal virtues in the Indian code of honour, and he felt while thus creeping stealthily upon the haunt of his people, an assurance of the distinction that awaited his success, as firm as that of the warrior when preparing for battle, and that gave a pleasing glow of excitement to his toil.

After several days of weary travel, and nights of brief slumber, he found himself in the neighbourhood of the camp, about which he hovered while daylight lasted, making such observations as might be necessary for his purpose, and when night threw over the wilderness, the curtain which usually affords security to guilt, while it sometimes lends a shield to valour, the young Indian prepared to intrude himself by stealth into the guarded retreat of his own people. Having ascertained, during the day, the positions of the watchmen, it was not difficult for the active and ardent youth to avoid them; and at the midnight hour he stood in the midst of the camp.

Wayworn and hungry, a less determined individual might have lingered to repose, or to procure the means of satisfying the painful cravings of appetite. But Ishtakka dared not yield to the temptation. All his hopes of success and reputation were at stake; every thing he held dear in life depended on the steadiness

of purpose, with which he should complete an enterprise, prosecuted thus far with vigour. He had doubtless received previous lessons in the art of self-denial, for the earliest maxims inculcated upon the Indian mind are those which teach implicit obedience to their superiors, and to the laws of the tribe, and a rigid subjection of their passions. It is this discipline which produces the forbearance that passes with casual observers for apathy of temperament; for when the restraints which cause it are removed, the savage gives way to rage, to appetite, or to indolence, not only like other men, but often to a degree unknown in other forms of society. Ishtakka, therefore, like the Spartan boy who carried the fox in his bosom, bore the gnawings of hunger and the pangs of fatigue, without a murmur, and moved steadily on to the achievement of his purpose.

He stood in the camp of a fierce clan, who were surrounded by all the guards that experience and caution could suggest, and who slept with arms upon their persons, ready to start up on the slightest alarm. Accustomed to frequent and sudden attacks, they slept lightly. The bark of a dog, the neigh of a horse, the cracking of a dried twig, under the foot of the intruder, reaching some watchful ear, would startle the whole band, and expose him either to instant death, or a disgraceful discovery. Darkness and the silence of the grave were around him, and as he stole with noiseless steps, from lodge to lodge, more than one watch-dog crept stealthily towards him, and then scenting a friend, returned to his lair.

It was not long before he discovered the lodge of the Peace Chief, and after pausing a moment to satisfy himself that the inmates slumbered, he entered it. All was dark and silent. By the faint light of a few expiring embers, that glimmered in the fire-place in the centre of the lodge, he discovered the Peace Chief and his family, lying with their feet towards the fire, all buried in slumber. The chief roused himself for a moment, and turned his face towards the intruder, who carelessly threw himself on the ground, as if to sleep, and was taken for one of the family. While thus reclining, the youth surveyed the interior of the lodge, and marked the exact position of the articles he was seeking to purloin, and then again approached the fire, which he

carefully covered up. As he moved, however, for this purpose, he accidentally touched the foot of the chief's daughter—the very one whose hand he sought in marriage—and she, not dreaming that any other than one of her own family had thus trespassed on her repose, gave unconsciously a slight kick,—we will not say a graceful one,—which lighted full upon the shoulder of the intruder, as he stooped over the embers, and almost threw him off of his centre; indeed, it well nigh upset his gravity in more than one sense, for he could with difficulty restrain himself from bursting into a paroxysm of laughter. Resolving to take advantage of this incident, and, as our party politicians say, make capital out of it, he gently seized the foot of the sleeping girl, and drew from it the moccasin, which he secured in his girdle. Pausing again until all was quiet, he then stepped lightly but quickly to the spots where the articles he sought were deposited, and having secured them, made his escape.

A week afterwards Ishtakka, having returned to the spot where he had left the Flathead band of hunters, and thence followed the trail of their subsequent wanderings, presented himself before Incillo. He modestly recounted his adventures, and in confirmation of his success, produced the knife and the pipe of the Peace Chief, which he delivered to his leader.

"I will take them and return them to the Peace Chief," said Incillo. "He will be glad that one of our young men has shown himself so worthy."

"I have done something more," added the youth, smiling archly, and showing the girl's moccasin, "I took this from the foot of the Peace Chief's daughter, as she slept, and brought it with me, to show my father that he had given me an easy task, and that I was willing to do more than he commanded."

"My son has done well," rejoined the chief. "He speaks wisely also when he says he has done but little. But I am satisfied, for he who does small things well, may be trusted with greater matters. Go now and rest until to-morrow; I will then employ you in something that will require more manhood, than taking a pipe from the lodge of a peaceable old man, or a moccasin from the foot of a sleeping girl."

Ishtakka felt somewhat humbled, at the slight commendation

which had been accorded to his exploit, and as he retired to seek the repose which he needed, pondered on the words of his chief.

Being now in the neighbourhood of large herds of buffalo, the whole band rode forth early the next morning upon a grand hunt. They soon reached a commanding point, from whence they could see the plain covered for miles with these animals, thousands and tens of thousands of which grazed quietly upon the vast natural meadow. The Indians had been careful to approach from the leeward, so that the sagacious herd had not scented them upon the tainted breeze; and they now sat upon their horses gazing upon the rich scene, for a brief space, while they divided their force to attack the game to the best advantage. Ishtakka looked upon the inspiring prospect with delight, and longed for the commencement of the sport, when the hunters who were now silently surrounding a portion of the herd, would be seen rushing upon them at full speed, from various directions, when all the energy and action of man and horse would be exerted, and the most prodigious feats of horsemanship and archery would be displayed by these eager sportsmen. He panted to be among them, and was wondering to which of the various parties that were filing off, he would be assigned, when Incillo, who, having given his orders, was quietly looking on, called him to him, and turning his back on the scene of the proposed hunt, rode slowly off in the opposite direction.

"Let Ishtakka listen," said the chief, as they rode side by side.

The youth signified attention, by the utterance of a single syllable, well known to those who have mingled in the society of the Rocky Mountains.

"Many days journey from here, and in that direction," continued the chief, pointing with his hand, "there is a camp of our mortal enemies the Blackfeet. Among them is a war chief, who is called the 'Killer of men,' on account of his numerous victories, and his own personal success in battle. He is also celebrated as the owner of the 'Black Steed of the Prairies,'* a remarkably fleet, strong and beautiful horse, of a deep sable, without spot or blemish. This noble animal was taken wild upon the

* See Appendix, No. II.

plains, where he was the leader of a herd, and by his fine form and carriage had attracted the attention of all the hunters. There was not a brave who did not long to possess this fine steed, who, as he swept gracefully over the plain, outstripped his fellows in swiftness, as much as he excelled them in beauty; and many attempts were made to catch him, but all in vain, until he fell into the hands of his present master, who soon rendered him perfectly manageable."

"Ishtakka has an eye, and knows a good horse when he sees him. He cannot mistake any other for the Black Steed of the Prairies. Should he see him among a thousand, he will remark his small head carried high above all others, his slender ear pointed forwards, his large eye full of fire and courage, his fine limbs, and a tail that trails like that of the fox. Now listen to my words: Ishtakka would be ranked among the braves. Let him show that his heart is bold, that his hand is quick, and that his foot is so light that even the dry leaves do not rustle as he walks. My son must bring me the horse of the Blackfoot chief. I have no more to say."

"Incillo has spoken," was the brief reply of the youth, who, perplexed by the difficulty of the enterprise allotted him, remained lost in reflection, while the chief dashed off at full speed towards his people, and was soon engaged in the animating chase of the buffaloes, who were now flying in every direction.*

No light adventure was that which our young hero had undertaken. It was not merely the fire of youthful courage, burning for distinction, nor the audacity of inexperienced valour, underrating the danger of the enterprise, nor yet the brazen front that would look down opposition by seeming to despise it, that could ensure success in such an exploit. The sage Incillo knew well that courage is the common possession of all who are bred in the habits of a military people, and that the more valuable qualities of coolness and sagacity, are to be implanted and cultivated by discipline—by that experience and self-reliance, which renders the warrior alert, vigilant, and fertile of expedient. He imposed, therefore, upon the youth, a task which would bring into exercise

* See Appendix, No. III.

all his mental and physical resources, and which, instead of giving play to an impetuous courage, would require caution, patience, and self-control. The adventurer must travel alone over a vast tract of wilderness, providing subsistence for himself and his horse without unnecessary exposure, and eluding any parties of the enemy he might chance to meet. He must find the village of the Blackfeet, and if that tribe should have moved, or the chief he sought to despoil be absent, must follow their trail over the boundless prairie, or through the defiles of the mountain, exposed continually to capture and death. He must enter by stealth the well-guarded camp of a hostile people, seize and remove his intended prize, and at last, effect his escape from the inevitable pursuit of a numerous and well-mounted band, expert in all the strategy of savage warfare.

The motives of human action, and all the springs of thought, are so dependent upon the modifications of society, that it is scarcely possible to reason confidently upon the one, where we are not familiar with the other. It would be difficult therefore to convey to any sentimental or romantic reader,—supposing that reader to be a civilized man or maiden,—any adequate idea of the feelings of a young savage, pricking forth like an errant knight upon his first adventure, with a vast field of unknown perils before him, and lady-love at home, who was waiting to be made happy by his success, or wretched by his failure.

We may suppose, however, that Ishtakka went forward upon his almost hopeless journey, with feelings such as usually accompany the youth upon his first battle-field—with a trepidation allayed by the reflection, that as thousands have passed harmless through the same danger, he would probably be equally fortunate, though he could scarcely imagine the possibility of escaping the natural result of such perils—with a hope, that as laurels had been gathered upon such fields, he too would gain the proudest honours, though wholly ignorant how they should be won. Thus are the visions of youth gladdened by the happy faculty of turning the eye from gloomy realities to bright illusions—of fixing the gaze upon a distant and alluring object, while the obstacles that lie near are overlooked. And thus Ishtakka went boldly forward, hoping and believing he should win, though he scarcely

knew how or where to seek the prize, and had matured no plan to guide his steps. He depended on his luck, and where is the light-hearted youth, who ever doubted his own good fortune?

Passing over many long days of tedious travel, and nights of solitary repose, varied chiefly by storm and sunshine, by hunger and repletion, behold our hero in the vicinity of the enemy's camp. He has abandoned his horse, and is lurking about in holes and hiding places, watching the Blackfeet, who are riding to and fro over the plain. When they approach him he creeps into a ravine, or conceals himself in a thicket until they pass,—then he looks out again and watches every passer with a keen and anxious eye. Happily their dogs have not scented him, for if discovered, speedy and sorrowful would be the end of his adventure.

Among those who rode near the place of his concealment, was the owner of the Black Steed, and Ishtakka trembled with excitement as he beheld the object for which he had made so bold a venture. He marked the noble animal, graceful and full of fire, whose hoofs seemed to rebound with an elastic spring, as they touched the ground, and the rider, a fine warlike man, of large frame and stern countenance, whose bearing was that of a mighty chief. Great would seem the disparity between that proud warrior, and the weary and squalid boy, who dared to come as a spoiler to his dwelling.

That night as Ishtakka sat, viewing the expiring fires of the camp, and pondering in his mind how to effect an entrance, a number of women, carrying burthens, passed along the path near which he was sitting. Instantly forming his plan, he seized a small log that lay near, wrapped it in his blanket, and threw it over his back, in a manner to resemble the loads borne by the women. Bending his body forward, he slyly joined the company; the tired and heavy-laden women not noticing the addition to their numbers. Adroitly placing himself in the rear, where he would attract least notice, he entered the village with them, and as they separated to go to their respective lodges, he went apart, and sat down by the trunk of a large tree.

Soon all was silent, and he began to wander about the village in search of the Black Steed. Here and there he met persons, wrapped in their blankets, and moving with noiseless steps: he

did not stop to inquire their business, and they, imitating his good manners, or equally willing to avoid recognition, suffered him to pass unchallenged. He found several places where groups of horses were secured, but without discovering the one he sought; and fearing to excite attention by too minute a scrutiny, he was about to abandon the village for the night, when he perceived a horse standing before one of the lodges. Walking boldly up, he discovered, to his great joy, that it was the one he was seeking; the colour, as nearly as he could tell by the murky starlight, was black, the hair, unlike that of most of the Indian horses, was smooth and silky to the touch, and the form was not to be mistaken. The entrance of the lodge was unclosed, and as he stooped down to seek the end of the halter for the purpose of unloosing it, he discovered, to his surprise, that it was held in the hand of a sleeping man.

It was no doubt the bold and wary chief, the Killer of many men, who, in consequence of previous attempts to steal so valuable an animal, had adopted this singular plan of securing him. He paused to consider how he should separate the halter from the hand that grasped it firmly even in sleep; and now when about to succeed or to fail, in the scheme which had been prosecuted through such peril and fatigue, and when a single movement of his body, would consign him to immediate death, or gain a trophy which would place him high in honour among the braves of his nation, a nervous tremour shook his frame, and for a moment rendered him incapable of action. As he paused, to regain composure, the tempting thought occurred, of enhancing the brilliancy of the exploit, by the death of the chief. A new vigour braced his nerves. He grasped his knife; his finger touched the lock of hair placed there to remind him of the prize he sought; a step brought him within striking distance; he stooped over the tall form of the slumberer, and with a rapid blow buried his knife in the heart of his victim. Thrice did he repeat the blow, in quick succession, while he grasped the dying man so as to suppress the sound of his voice. In a moment all was over. He took the scalp from the slaughtered chief, and disengaging the halter from the now powerless hand, led away his prize. There was less difficul-

ty in leaving the encampment; all were asleep but the watchmen, and these made no question of one passing outwards.

When Ishtakka returned to his people, several weeks had elapsed since his departure, and the place of encampment had again been changed. But he traced them from place to place, and when he rode into the village mounted on the Black Steed, many looked at him, and exchanged glances, but no one asked him any question. He alighted at the lodge of his mother, who, without speaking, led away the horse. Entering the lodge, he sat down, without noticing any one, threw aside his arms and remained silent until his mother placed food before him, which he devoured greedily, for he had not eaten any thing for several days. Then raising his head, he spoke to one and another of the family, as if he had been absent but a few hours, and then, gradually, in reply to their questions, detailed some of the prominent events that had occurred to him. Such is the custom of the American Indian.

Presently he saw that the chiefs and principal men had seated themselves round the war pole, and he went and took his seat among them. Incillo lighted a pipe, and it was passed round. Then the chief said,

"Ishtakka has taken the Black Steed of the Prairies."

"He has also struck the Killer of Men," added the youth, displaying the scalp.

He then narrated his adventures, which so delighted his auditors, that they danced the war dance, and Ishtakka was declared worthy to go to war with the braves. He offered the black horse to Incillo, but the chief insisted on his retaining the steed, which he had won with such persevering courage.

And now Ishtakka, mounted on the Black Steed of the Prairies, rode gallantly among the braves of his nation, exciting universal envy and admiration, for no man was so well mounted, and the grace and dexterity of his horsemanship could not be excelled. It was a noble sight to see him in the chase, overtaking the buffalo with perfect ease, and riding fearlessly abreast of the fiercest bull, guiding his horse by the inclination of his own body, and the pressure of his heel, and discharging his arrows with fatal certainty. In vain did the enraged animal turn suddenly upon his pursuer, with a fury that in most cases would have hurled horse

and rider upon the plain, for the Black Steed, with an instinct equal to his spirit, would evade the attack by nimbly springing aside, and by a few vigorous bounds would again place himself in a position from which Ishtakka could discharge his arrows.

In the pursuit of an enemy, in battle or in flight, the young warrior was equally fortunate; his sagacious steed seemed on every occasion to catch the spirit of his rider, or to possess a native sagacity and courage, which bore him into the thickest of the battle and carried him triumphantly through every danger; showing, in servitude, the same pride, which had marked him as the noblest of his race, when he roved through his native pastures as the leader of his herd.

After several successful expeditions, Ishtakka returned to the village with his head ornamented by three feathers of the war eagle, indicating the number of foes he had slain. So greatly did the Flatheads pride themselves upon the precocious destructiveness of the young brave, that Incillo, the war chief, caused several of his fattest dogs to be killed, and made a great feast, at which they gave Ishtakka a new name of no less than fifty syllables, which signified, when interpreted, "*He that stole the horse of horses, and killed the killer of many men*"—which name, however, on account of its inconvenient length, we shall not attempt to use in this narrative, but adhere to that with which the reader has become familiar.

These fine doings made a wonderful stir in the Flathead village, and were not unobserved by the Peace Chief and his wife.

"We were very foolish," said she, "in not giving our daughter to Ishtakka. He is a fine young man; what were you thinking of not to see it? I always thought well of him."

"It was very foolish of you, sure enough," replied the husband, "to refuse so good an offer. You know you always have your own way."

So they both were satisfied with their own sagacity, and each was vexed that the other had not been gifted with the power of foreknowledge. But although the course of true love had, as usual, not run smooth, the stream was neither exhausted nor diverted from its destined channel, but was now rippling gayly along, margined by flowers, and sparkling in the sunbeams of success.

In the fulness of time the young brave renewed his suit, and was accepted, and the marriage was solemnized immediately.

At a feast given on that occasion, several of the warriors related anecdotes of their adventures. Among others an old man rose, and delivered a speech to the following effect:*

"Chiefs and braves! I am an old man—my head is white—I am like a tree blasted by lightning from the hand of the Master of Life. But I was not always withered as I am now. Young sprouts were nourished under my protection—they will show what I was. It is not of myself that I am going to speak, but of one that I nourished when he was a little child.

"Chiefs and brothers, listen! Here stands our brother that stole the horse of horses, and killed the killer of many men. Listen!

"He that speaks to you was once a young brave. He could strike the enemy—the scalps of the Blackfeet were hung up in his lodge—but his heart was soft—he had pity on a little boy. The Master of Life put it in his heart to spare a small child from death. Listen!

"Fathers and brothers, listen! We had struck the Blackfeet, and they were not able to stand against us. We rushed into their camp, in the night, and they fled. One bold woman having dropped her child, turned back, and fought over it like a she-wolf. She was knocked down, and left among the dead. I seized the child, and was about to bury my knife in his body, when a good bird whispered in my ear not to kill him. The good bird said, He will surely become a great brave—the Great Spirit loves him, and will make him an honour to the Flatheads. Then I listened to that good bird, and brought the boy home, and gave him to our brother the Arrow, who had lost a son.

"Fathers and brothers, I have not much more to say—listen! He that speaks to you told the Arrow what the good bird said; so he adopted the boy and brought him up as his own. The Arrow is no more. His bones are white—his spirit is gone to the happy land. His widow is alone, but the Great Spirit took pity on her. That little boy that she took to be her son, has grown up to be a great brave. There he stands!

* See Appendix, No. IV.

"Grey-headed fathers, and you too, my brothers, listen! That good bird did not lie. The boy has become a man. The Blackfeet have felt the weight of his war-club—his war-whoop has made them tremble. He has taken the horse of horses from the hand of their chief, and killed the killer of many men. I have no more to say."

So it appeared that Ishtakka was by birth a Blackfoot. This fact had been well known to all the Flatheads, yet they neither loved nor trusted him the less; nor was there any reason for want of confidence, for he was as faithful to them as if he had been a native. There is no feature in the savage character more singular than this. Hostile tribes hate each other with an excessive rancour, which is cherished and handed down from one generation to another. Every art is used by the leaders to increase and perpetuate this aversion; and such is the antipathy existing between many tribes, that individuals have professed to know an enemy in the dark, by the scent, or the touch, and to shrink from each other's presence with a loathing, like that which some persons feel towards a noxious reptile. They murder women and children as men crush serpents, not from a sense of present danger, but out of hatred for the race. But if in a moment of caprice they resolve to spare the detested offspring of an enemy, it becomes at once an object of fondness. The stain of birth is instantly removed. The young stranger is so unreservedly adopted, as to become completely identified with the stock into which he is engrafted. If Ishtakka knew his own origin, it is not probable that the knowledge ever cost him a moment of uneasiness, nor perhaps a moment of serious thought.

A few months only had elapsed after the events last narrated, when the Flathead village was thrown into a panic, one morning, by the news that the Black Steed was missing. He had been secured in the very centre of the village, around which sentinels watched in every direction; yet he had been taken away, and no trail was found to indicate the direction pursued by the spoiler. Some shook their heads mysteriously, and whispered to each other their suspicions that the Black Steed was a medicine—a spirit—a manito, who had tarried with the Flatheads just as long as was perfectly convenient and agreeable to himself, and had then van-

ished, or transformed himself into some other shape. He might be lurking near, in some den, in the form of a great rattlesnake, or hovering over their heads in that of a vulture, or grinning at them through the teeth of a raccoon, from an overhanging ledge of rock. The old women thought it prudent to speak of him but briefly, and in terms of marked respect. Several braves were now ready to testify what had not been suggested before—that they had often, when following the Black Steed, looked for his tracks, but had uniformly been disappointed; this wonderful horse having the faculty of passing over the ground with the swiftness of the wind, without leaving the print of his footsteps. There were some veteran warriors, who could have told, had they chosen, how horses had been taken with such adroitness as to leave no mark nor sign to betray the hand of the marauder; and Ishtakka himself had no doubt that the Blackfeet, mortified by the disgrace of having so noted an animal taken audaciously from the midst of their encampment, had redeemed the character of their nation by a recapture equally expert. But the medicine men, and all the women, hooted at the idea of any human agency in so mysterious an event, and the braves, whether convinced or not, acquiesced in silence, as the men usually do every where when the doctors and the women unite in opinion.

Ishtakka was a sorry man. He had lost the trophy of a valorous exploit—the talisman of a brilliant career. He was like the shorn Sampson, who went to sleep a man of mighty strength, and awoke from the lap of Delilah to a sense of comparative insignificance. He wandered about moodily for several days. He had the best reasons in the world for believing the horse to be flesh and blood, for he had fed and rode him, and almost lived in his company, for several months, and he knew that the events which had placed the animal in his possession, were quite as singular as that which had caused so much wonder. But Indians are prone to superstition, and when he recalled all the circumstances, his convictions at times became unsettled, and he doubted whether he might not have been the sport of some mischievous manito. Finally he resolved to go in pursuit of the Black Steed; and as he was impressed with the idea that the proposed enterprise would

be difficult and dangerous, he determined to seek the protection of the Great Spirit by prayer and abstinence.

Having admonished his wife of his intention, he laid aside all his ornaments, blacked his face as one mourning under calamity, and retired to a solitary place, where he remained three days without food. A part of this time he spent in prayer to the Master of Life, and in various incantations to disarm the malice of evil manitos, and during the intervals between these exercises he sate in silence, banishing sleep by torturing his flesh with thorns, and by other cruel devices. Morning and evening he bathed, and afterwards blacked his face, smeared his body with earth, placed earth upon his head, and called upon the Master of Life to take pity on him, and to drive away the bad manitos who had planned his destruction.

On the morning of the fourth day he washed himself, and having returned to his lodge, directed his wife to kill a dog and invite his friends to a feast. A crier was accordingly sent out into the village, who proclaimed that certain persons, whom he named, were invited to the lodge of Ishtakka to partake of a feast which was now ready, and advising them to come soon, and to bring their own bowls and spoons. The guests were quickly assembled, and Ishtakka appeared before them with a cheerful countenance, freshly anointed with bear's oil, painted with vermilion, and adorned with war feathers and trinkets. The canine feast was consumed, but the entertainer said nothing of his design; and when they had smoked, the guests thanked him for the comfortable cheer they had enjoyed, wished him good luck, and all dispersed to their own lodges. The next morning Ishtakka was absent; no one knew whither he had gone, but all guessed that he was upon some dangerous adventure.

Various are the perils that beset the solitary traveller in the wilderness, and many there are who perish in the great forests and upon the vast plains of Western America, though the greater number of those who traverse them, avoid or escape the dangers which would seem insurmountable to civilized men. When the earth is covered with snow, or parched by drought, those animals which furnish game to the hunter are no longer to be seen; while at other times, even when surrounded by plenty, the loss

of his weapons, or any injury which renders them useless, deprives the lone traveller of the wilderness of the means of subsistence.

Ishtakka had his full share of difficulties. There were some evil spirits who delighted to torment him, and at every step he experienced their malign influence. After travelling a few days over verdant prairies, he came to a region of parched sand, that was destitute of herbage, affording no food for man or beast. Two vultures, who were probably malignant spirits in that shape, pursued him for several days, hovering in the air above him by day, and perching near him at night, awaiting the hour when they might gorge themselves with the flesh of the worn-out traveller. When he slept, these horrid creatures flapped their wings over his head, and when he awoke it was to see their eyes gloating upon him in hungry desire. His mouth was parched by thirst, and his limbs emaciated by want of sustenance. His starved horse became lame and galled, and at last sunk under him, and then, leaving the expiring beast a prey to the vultures, Ishtakka tottered along on foot.

Worn down and famished, the youth arrives at last at the former camping ground of the Blackfeet, and finds the place deserted. He crawls about in search of some cast-off fragment of food, or of some living or creeping thing that might be devoured, and sustain for the present the life that was fast ebbing, but without success. A gaunt dog, that ran howling away at the sight of a rival tenant of the solitude, had gleaned the miserable leavings of the departed horde.

At a distance he perceived a pole standing upright, with a bunch of feathers waving at the top; and creeping towards it, he found it to be erected on a small, newly-made mound of earth, indicating the grave of some distinguished person. He could go no further; and retiring into a thicket which might shelter him from the night breeze, he laid down to sleep, and perhaps to die.

The sun had gone down, and the mellowed hues of twilight were gathered over the landscape;—the wind was hushed—not a foot nor a wing stirred on the broad prairie, and all was still. The tramp of men was heard—a party of Blackfoot braves slowly approached, and arranging themselves around the grave, stood in

silence. At that moment a bird perched upon a neighbouring tree, began to pour out the rich and full melody of his song; and they who stood about the sepulchre listened in sadness, as if they recognised a voice that sympathized in their grief. Then Ishtakka knew that the grave was that of a great warrior; that the braves who had followed him in battle were gathered around the spot where his remains were deposited, to do honour to his memory, and that his spirit, in the shape of a bird, was speaking to them, and showing how grateful was that homage from his friends, and telling them he was happy in the land of the blessed.*

The mourners retired. One figure only remained; it was a woman who sate by the grave and wept bitterly. Ishtakka, refreshed a little by the cool breeze of the evening, crawled from his hiding-place and sat down near her. Bodily anguish had softened his heart, and he was touched by the sorrows of this poor woman. She raised her head and looked for a moment towards the intruder, and then resumed her wailing. After a while she said,

"Why do you sit there watching me? Is it strange to see a woman mourning by the grave of her husband?"

"I am a stranger—a poor famished traveller—the sun and the moon have risen and gone down several times since I have tasted food—I am dying of thirst, and am too much exhausted to seek for water."

"I pity you, but I cannot help you. I have crawled here to die by the bones of the great chief, the *Killer of many men.*"

"What name was that?" inquired the youth with a broken voice.

"Are you a Flathead, that his name makes you tremble?"

"I am a Flathead; but the name you mention does not scare me. I never feared a Blackfoot, living or dead. If I had the strength which once belonged to me, I would dance over the bones of the *Killer of Men*, and laugh at the anger of his spirit; but it is not with me now as it once was, and I desire to lie down in peace by the bones of my enemy."

"Vagabond and outcast! how dare you speak thus of the dead! Get thee away from this place—hide thyself in the bushes,

* See Appendix, No. V.

and die like a dog in a secret place. Do not stay here—are you not afraid, villain of a Flathead, that his spirit will rise up and crush you?"

"Why should I fear him?" retorted the youth; "is a spirit to be feared more than a living man? Did he not fall by the hand of a Flathead?"

"No one knows by whose hand he fell," said the woman angrily; "some thieves crawled into our camp at night, stole away his horse, and murdered the great chief. They were not men, not braves, but cowardly thieves. They stabbed him while he slept. But it was like the Flatheads—they do not face men in open day. Once before—many years ago—they broke into our hunting camp and seized upon my child—I had only one, a little boy—I snatched up a club and fought by the side of my husband—there were but us two, and they were many; but the Killer of Men was very strong and beat them off—they ran away like cowards, carrying our child, to murder him in cold blood, at their leisure."

"And you never heard any more of the child?"

"No, never."

A pause ensued. The woman again spoke,

"They were not allowed to keep the Black Steed—that is some comfort—our young men pursued the thieves, and brought back the horse. It was determined that no one else should ever ride him. He was killed and buried here*—the bones of the chief were deposited in the same place—and this mound was raised over them. The horse and rider are now together in the happy hunting grounds."

The woman ceased speaking.

After a pause the youth inquired,

"Had that child a remarkable scar on the left foot?"

"Yes, he was badly scalded on that foot."

Then Ishtakka said, "Listen to me, I have something to say before I die. It almost kills me to say it. I am too young to remember it, but this is what the Flatheads say.—Twenty years ago, a Blackfoot woman stood over her child, with a war-club in her

* See Appendix, No. VI.

hand, beating off the Flatheads, that sought to kill it. She was struck down and left for dead, and the little boy was taken prisoner. A Flathead woman put him to her breast, and he knew no other mother. He grew up among them, and became a brave. I am that boy."

The woman started. Her eyes were riveted on the expiring youth, in an eager effort to ascertain the truth of his disclosure, by tracing out on his features some mark of the lineage he asserted.

"Do not claim me as your son," continued the young man, "until you hear the name I bear among the Flatheads. Would that the Great Spirit had crushed me under his heel, before I won that dreadful name! They call me, *Him who stole the horse of horses and killed the killer of many men.*"

"Dog of a Flathead!" exclaimed the woman, springing at him with the ferocity of an enraged wolf, "do you dare to acknowledge yourself as the murderer of *him*, and claim to be his son!"

The hapless Ishtakka spoke no more. His head was sunk upon his father's grave, and he was breathing his last.

The wretched mother gazed upon her expiring son with mingled emotions of wonder, resentment, and pity. The long smothered fire of maternal love burst out anew. "Who shall blame him?" she exclaimed. "He was nursed in a den of serpents, who gave him the poison that stung his father. I will go with my son to the land of spirits, and ask his father to forgive him!"

They who came to visit the grave the next day found the dead bodies of the mother and son clasped together, and although none knew why they should be thus united in death, a suspicion of the truth, induced the surviving relatives of the deceased to bury the bones of the deceased in the mound they had reared over the warlike chief. It was observed that the bird sang no more over that lone grave in the wilderness.

THE WAR BELT.

A LEGEND OF NORTH BEND.*

In the year 1786, there stood upon the margin of the Ohio, near the mouth of the Miami, a small fortress, over which waved the flag of the United States. The banner was that of a confederacy which had just emerged from a successful struggle with one of the most powerful nations of the world, and over which the illustrious Washington presided as Chief Magistrate. In the eye of a military engineer, the fort would not have deserved that name, as it was a temporary structure, intended only to protect its small garrison against a sudden attack by an Indian force. It was composed of a series of log houses, opening upon an interior area, while the outer sides, closely connected, formed a quadrangular rampart, without apertures, except a single entrance, and a few loop-holes from which to discharge fire-arms. The whole presented the appearance of a single edifice, receiving light from the centre, and forming barracks for the garrison, as well as breastworks against the foe. The forest was cleared away for some hundreds of yards around, leaving an open vista, which extended to the water's edge; and a few acres inclosed in a rude fence, and planted with corn and vegetables, for the use of the soldiers, exhibited the first attempt at agriculture in that wild and beautiful region.

It will be recollected, that when the shores of the Ohio were first explored by the adventurous pioneers, no villages were found upon them; not a solitary lodge was seen along its secluded waters. The numerous and warlike tribes, whose battle-cry was often

* See Appendix, No. VII.

heard on the frontier, inhabited the tributary branches of the Ohio, leaving the immediate shores of that river an untenanted wilderness, rich in the glorious productions of nature, and animated only by the brute and the wild bird, by the lurking hunter and the stealthy war party. It seemed as if man had been expelled from this blooming paradise, and only invaded its flowery precincts at intervals, to war upon his fellow-man, or to ravage the pastures of the deer and the buffalo. Historians are not agreed as to the reasons of this curious arrangement; but we suppose that the Manito of the Red man had reserved this loveliest of vallies to be the happy hunting-ground of the blessed, and that though living forms were seldom seen within it, the spirits of warriors lingered here, to mourn the destiny of their race, and curse the coming of the white man.

A few adventurous pioneers from Pennsylvania, Virginia, and North Carolina, had crossed the Alleghanies and settled at different places, far distant from each other; but these also were inland as respected the great river; the civilized man avoiding its dangerous shores on the one side, from an instinct similar to that which induced the Indian to shun a residence upon them on the other.

All the tribes inhabiting the country north of the Ohio, were at that time hostile to the American people, and beheld with great jealousy these migrations into the west, that indicated an intention to plant a civilized population on this side of the mountains. The agents also of a foreign power, which saw with dissatisfaction the growing prosperity of the United States, deemed this a favourable moment to unite the savage tribes against our young republic, and they were accordingly instructed to address such arguments to the chiefs as would be likely to effect that object. Councils were accordingly held, and arms and trinkets distributed by those unprincipled emissaries. In consequence of these efforts, the hostile feelings of the savages, already sufficiently bitter, became greatly excited; and at the period of which we write, a war with the combined forces of the north-western tribes seemed inevitable.

The policy of the American government was pacific. They did not aim at conquest. They desired to extend to the savages within their borders the same justice by which their foreign rela-

tions were intended to be governed. Difficult as this proposition might seem, it was not deemed impracticable. That the enterprising and intelligent population of the United States would spread out from the seaboard over the wilderness; that the savage must retire before civilized man; that the desert must be reclaimed from a state of nature, and be subjected to the hand of art, were propositions too evident to be concealed or denied. Had the government been disposed to perpetuate the reign of barbarism over the fairest portion of our country, it could not have enforced its decree for a purpose so inconsistent with the interests of the people, and the spirit of the age. But it never was intended that the Indian should be driven from his hunting grounds by violence; and while a necessity, strong as the law of nature, decreed the expulsion of the mere hunter, and gave dominion to art, industry, and religion, it was always proposed that the savage should be removed by negociation, and a just price given for the relinquishment of his possessory title.

Had these counsels prevailed, humanity would have been spared the anguish and humiliation of blushing for acts of deception, and weeping over scenes of bloodshed. They did not prevail: the magnanimous policy of the government remained unaltered; but many individuals have committed deep wrongs against the savages, while the latter, misled to their ruin by foreign interference, spurned at the offers of conciliation, the acceptance of which would have insured to them the strong protection of the nation.

Such was the posture of affairs, when the little fortress alluded to was established, at the outlet of the fertile valley of the Miami, and near the track by which the war parties approached the Ohio, in their incursions into Kentucky. The position was also that selected by Judge Symmes and others, the purchasers from Congress of a large tract of country, as the site of a future city; though a trivial accident afterward changed the locality, and placed the Queen City of the West at a point twenty miles farther up the Ohio. It was near the head of that great bend of the Ohio, now widely known as North Bend,—a spot which has become classic ground to the American, as the residence of that excellent man, and distinguished statesman and soldier, the vene-

rated and lamented Harrison. The fort was garrisoned by a small party of soldiers, commanded by a captain, who was almost as much insulated from the rest of the world as Alexander Selkirk in the island of Juan Fernandez.

At this sequestered spot, a treaty was to be held by commissioners appointed by the President, with the Shawanoes, a migratory and gallant nation, which had fought from South Carolina to Pennsylvania, along the whole line of the western frontier, and whose eventful history, unless it has been lately collected by an ingenious writer who is about to publish a life of Tecumthe, remains to be written. It is enough to say of them here, that no western tribe has produced so many distinguished individuals, or carried on so constant a series of daring enterprises.

For several days previous to that appointed for holding the council, parties of Indian warriors were seen arriving and erecting their temporary lodges at a short distance from the fort. An unwonted bustle disturbed the silence which usually reigned at this retired spot. Groups of savages, surrounding their camp-fires, passed the hours in conversation and in feasting; the tramp of horses and the barking of dogs were heard in every direction. The number of Indians assembled was much greater than was necessary, or was expected; and their disposition seemed to be anything but pacific. Irritated by recent events, and puffed up by delusive promises of support, they wore an offended and insolent air. Their glances were vindictive, and their thirst for vengeance scarcely concealed. No one acquainted with the savage character could doubt their intentions, or hesitate for a moment to believe they only waited to ripen their plan of treachery, and at a moment which should be most favourable to their purposes, to butcher every white man in their power.

The situation of the garrison was very precarious. The fort was a slight work, which might be readily set on fire, and the number of Americans was too small to afford the slightest chance of success in open fight against the numerous force of the Shawanoes. The only hope for safety was in keeping them at a distance; but this was inconsistent with the purposes of meeting them in council, to treat for peace.

Both parties held separate councils on the day previous to that

appointed for the treaty. That of the Indians was declamatory and boisterous. The caution with which they usually feel their way, and the secrecy that attends all their measures, seems to have been abandoned. They had probably decided on their course, and deeming their enemy too weak to oppose any serious opposition, were declaiming upon their wrongs, for the purpose of lashing each other into that state of fury which would give relish for the horrid banquet at hand, by whetting the appetite for blood. The American commissioners saw with gloomy forebodings these inauspicious movements, and hesitated as to the proper course to be pursued. To treat with savages thus numerically superior, bent on treachery, and intoxicated with an expected triumph, seemed to be madness. To meet them in council, would be to place themselves at the mercy of ruthless barbarians, whose system of warfare justified and inculcated every species of stratagem, however disingenuous. To close the gate of the fortress, and break up the negociation, would be at the same time a declaration of war, and an acknowledgment of weakness, which would produce immediate hostilities. In either case, this little band of Americans stood alone, dependent on their own courage and sagacity only, and cut off from all hope of support. They were far beyond the reach of communication with any American post or settlement. Under these circumstances, it was proposed to postpone the treaty, upon some plausible pretence, and to endeavour to amuse the Indians, while the utmost diligence should be used in preparing the fort for a siege: and in this opinion all concurred save one; and happily that one was a master spirit, the Promethean fire of whose genius seldom failed to kindle up in other bosoms the courage that glowed in his own. That man was Colonel George Rogers Clarke.*

Clarke was a Virginian, of high spirit, and of consummate skill as a military leader. A series of daring exploits, evincing a brilliant genius in their conception, executed with accuracy and energy, and terminating in successful results, had placed his name in the first class of our revolutionary heroes. It was said of him, by one who had followed him in battle, "He was the

* See Appendix, No. VIII.

bravest man I ever knew; his courage was governed by a wisdom that bore him through whatever he undertook, in security and in triumph; and one could only see after the event, that it partook not of rashness nor presumption, although it bore that appearance." The truth was, that this remarkable man, to the gallant spirit that belonged to him as a native of Virginia, added a knowledge of human nature, that enabled him to read and control the minds around him, and a promptness and energy of purpose, that no ordinary obstacle could obstruct.

Whatever might have been the real opinion of Colonel Clarke on this occasion, he treated the idea of danger with ridicule, and insisted, calmly, cheerfully, even playfully, and in a way that disarmed all opposition from his colleagues, that the negociation should go forward.

An apartment in the fort was prepared as a council-room, and at the appointed hour, the doors were thrown open. At the head of the table sat Clarke, a soldier-like and majestic man, whose complexion, eyes, and hair all indicated a sanguine and mercurial temperament. The brow was high and capacious, the features were prominent and manly; and the expression, which was keen, reflective, and ordinarily cheerful and agreeable, was now grave, almost to sternness.

The Indians, being a military people, have a deep respect for martial virtue. To other estimable or shining qualities they turn a careless eye, or pay at best but a passing tribute, while they bow in profound veneration before a successful warrior. The name of Clarke was familiar to them: several brilliant expeditions into their country had spread the terror of his arms throughout their villages, and carried the fame of his exploits to every council-fire in the West. Their high appreciation of his character was exemplified in a striking as well as an amusing manner, on another occasion, when a council was held with several tribes. The celebrated Delaware chief, Buckinghelas, on entering the council-room, without noticing any other person, walked up to Clarke, and as he shook hands cordially with him, exclaimed, "It is a happy day when two such men as Colonel Clarke and Buckinghelas meet together!"*

* See Appendix, No. IX.

Such was the remarkable man who now presided at the council table. On his right hand sat Colonel Richard Butler, a brave officer of the revolution, who soon after fell, with the rank of brigadier-general, in the disastrous campaign of Saint Clair. On the other side was Samuel H. Parsons, a lawyer from New England, who afterwards became a judge in the north-western territory. At the same table sat the secretaries, while the interpreters, several officers, and a few soldiers, stood around.

An Indian council is one of the most imposing spectacles in savage life. It is one of the few occasions in which the warrior exercises his right of suffrage, his influence and his talents, in a civil capacity, and the meeting is conducted with all the gravity, and all the ceremonious ostentation, with which it is possible to invest it. The matter to be considered, as well as all the details, are well digested beforehand, so that the utmost decorum shall prevail, and the decision be unanimous. The chiefs and sages—the leaders and orators—occupy the most conspicuous seats; behind them are arranged the young braves, and still farther in the rear appear the women and youth, as spectators. All are equally attentive. A dead silence reigns throughout the assemblage. The great pipe, gaudily adorned with paint and feathers, is lighted, and passed from mouth to mouth, commencing with the chief highest in rank, and proceeding by regular gradation to the inferior order of braves. If two or three nations be represented, the pipe is passed from one party to the other, and salutations are courteously exchanged, before the business of the council is opened by the respective speakers. Whatever jealousy or party spirit may exist in the tribe, it is carefully excluded from this dignified assemblage, whose orderly conduct, and close attention to the proper subject before them, might be imitated with profit by some of the most enlightened bodies in christendom.

It was an alarming evidence of the temper now prevailing among them, and of the brooding storm that filled their minds, that no propriety of demeanour marked the entrance of the savages into the council-room. The usual formalities were forgotten, or purposely dispensed with, and an insulting levity substituted in their place.—The chiefs and braves stalked in, with an appearance of light regard, and seated themselves promiscuously

on the floor, in front of the commissioners. An air of insolence marked all their movements, and showed an intention to dictate terms, or to fix a quarrel upon the Americans.

A dead silence rested over the group; it was the silence of dread, distrust, and watchfulness; not of respect. The eyes of the savage band gloated upon the banquet of blood that seemed already spread out before them; the pillage of the fort, and the bleeding scalps of the Americans, were almost within their grasp; while that gallant little band saw the portentous nature of the crisis, and stood ready to sell their lives as dearly as possible.

The commissioners, without noticing the disorderly conduct of the other party, or appearing to have discovered their meditated treachery, opened the council in due form. They lighted the peace-pipe, and after drawing a few whiffs, passed it to the chiefs, who received it. Colonel Clarke then rose to explain the purpose for which the treaty was ordered. With an unembarrassed air, with the tone of one accustomed to command, and the easy assurance of perfect security and self-possession, he stated that the commissioners had been sent to offer peace to the Shawanoes; that the President had no wish to continue the war; he had no resentment to gratify; and, that if the red men desired peace, they could have it on liberal terms. "If such be the will of the Shawanoes," he concluded, "let some of their wise men speak."

A chief arose, drew up his tall person to its full height, and assuming a haughty attitude, threw his eye contemptuously over the commissioners and their small retinue, as if to measure their insignificance, in comparison with his own numerous train, and then stalking up to the table, threw upon it two belts of wampum, of different colours—the *war* and the *peace* belt.

"We come here," he exclaimed, "to offer you two pieces of wampum; they are of different colours; you know what they mean: you can take which you like!" And turning upon his heel, he resumed his seat.

The chiefs drew themselves up, in the consciousness of having hurled defiance in the teeth of the white men. They had offered an insult to the renowned leader of the Long Knives, to which they knew it would be hard for him to submit, while they did not suppose he would dare to resent it. The council-pipe was laid

aside, and those fierce wild men gazed intently on Clarke. The Americans saw that the crisis had arrived: they could no longer doubt that the Indians understood the advantage they possessed, and were disposed to use it; and a common sense of danger caused each eye to be turned on the leading commissioner. He sat undisturbed, and apparently careless, until the chief who had thrown the belts on the table had taken his seat: then, with a small cane which he held in his hand, he reached, as if playfully, toward the war-belt, entangled the end of the stick in it, drew it toward him, and then with a twitch of the cane, threw the belt into the midst of the chiefs. The effect was electric.—Every man in council, of each party, sprang to his feet; the savages, with a loud exclamation of astonishment, "Hugh!" the Americans in expectation of a hopeless conflict, against overwhelming numbers. Every hand grasped a weapon.

Clarke alone was unawed. The expression of his countenance changed to a ferocious sternness, and his eye flashed, but otherwise he was unmoved. A bitter smile was slightly perceptible upon his compressed lips, as he gazed upon that savage band, whose hundred eyes were bent fiercely and in horrid exultation upon him, as they stood like a pack of wolves at bay, thirsting for blood, and ready to rush upon him, whenever one bolder than the rest should commence the attack. It was one of those moments of indecision, when the slightest weight thrown into either scale will make it preponderate; a moment in which a bold man, conversant with the secret springs of human action, may seize upon the minds of all around him, and sway them at his will. Such a man was the intrepid Virginian. He spoke, and there was no man bold enough to gainsay him—none that could return the fierce glance of his eye. Raising his arm and waving his hand toward the door, he exclaimed: "*Dogs! you may go!*" The Indians hesitated for a moment, and then rushed tumultuously out of the council-room.

The decision of Clarke, on that occasion, saved himself and his companions from massacre. The plan of the savages had been artfully laid: he had read it in their features and conduct, as plainly as if it had been written upon a scroll before him. He met it in a manner which was unexpected; the crisis was brought

on sooner than was intended; and upon a principle similar to that by which, when a line of battle is broken, the dismayed troops fly, before order can be restored, the new and sudden turn given to these proceedings by the energy of Clarke, confounded the Indians, and before the broken thread of their scheme of treachery could be reunited, they were panic-struck. They had come prepared to brow-beat, to humble, and then to destroy; they looked for remonstrance, and altercation; for the luxury of drawing the toils gradually around their victims; of beholding their agony and degradation, and of bringing on the final catastrophe by an appointed signal, when the scheme should be ripe. They expected to see on our part great caution, a skilful playing off, and an unwillingness to take offence, which were to be gradually goaded into alarm, irritation, and submission. The cool contempt with which their first insult was thrown back in their teeth surprised them, and they were foiled by the self-possession of one man. They had no Tecumthe among them, no master-spirit to change the plan, so as to adapt it to a new exigency; and those braves, who in many a battle had shown themselves to be men of true valour, quailed before the moral superiority which assumed the vantage ground of a position they could not comprehend, and therefore feared to assail.

The Indians met immediately around their own council fire, and engaged in an animated discussion. Accustomed to a cautious warfare, they did not suppose a man of Colonel Clarke's known sagacity would venture upon a display of mere gasconade, or assume any ground that he was not able to maintain; and they therefore attributed his conduct to a consciousness of strength. They knew him to be a consummate warrior; gave him the credit of having judiciously measured his own power with that of his adversary; and suspected that a powerful reinforcement was at hand. Perhaps at that moment, when intent upon their own scheme, and thrown off their guard by imagined security, they had neglected the ordinary precautions that form a prominent feature in their system of tactics; they might be surrounded by a concealed force, ready to rush upon them at a signal from the fort. In their eagerness to entrap a foe, they might have blindly become entangled in a snare set for themselves. So fully were

they convinced that such was the relative position of the two parties, and so urgent did they consider the necessity for immediate conciliation, that they appointed a delegation to wait on Clarke, and express their willingness to accept peace on such terms as might be agreeable to him. The council reassembled, and a treaty was signed, under the dictation of the American commissioners. Such was the remarkable result of the intrepidity and presence of mind of George Rogers Clarke.

THE NEW MOON.

A TRADITION OF THE OMAWHAWS.

FAR up the Missouri River, where the shores of that turbid stream are bounded by interminable prairies, the traveller sees the remains of a village of the Maha Indians.* The former inhabitants, obeying a law of their erratic nature, have removed to some spot still more distant from the habitations of the white men, and better supplied with game. Nothing remains of them, but those vestiges which man, however poor or savage, always leaves behind him, to attest his superiority, even in his simplest state, over the brute of the forest.

The ruin is extensive, and of recent date. The naked poles, that once supported the frail lodges, are still standing scattered over the plain, and the blackened embers lie in heaps upon the deserted fire-places. The area which was once trodden hard by human feet, is now covered with a beautiful carpet of short, luxuriant blue grass, a sort of demi-civilized variety of grass, that will not grow in the wilderness where only brutes do congregate, but ever springs up near the habitations of man, flourishes round his ruined mansion long after his departure, and clothes with verdure the grave in which his body reposes.

The council house, where the warriors met to recount their victories, or to plan their hostile excursions, where the agent from the great nation of whites opened his budget, and the trader displayed his wares, where the preacher and the pedlar were alike hospitably smoked and welcomed—is entirely destroyed, and its remains are only distinguished from those of the other lodges, by their larger dimensions and central situation. Here too is seen crumb-

* See Appendix, No. X.

ling to decay, the war-post, around which the braves danced, in all the glory of paint and feathers—where the war-song was sung —where the buffalo dance has frequently been witnessed—and where masques and dramas have been performed, which were as fashionable in their day and generation, and quite as edifying, as the Italian opera, or the lecture on newly-invented sciences, of more refined communities. This was the scene of degradation and suffering to many an unhappy prisoner, where the most severe tortures that ingenious hatred could invent, were endured with the patience of the martyr, and the exulting captive dispatched to the spirit-land, in the most placid conviction of his own manhood, and of having earned a clear title to a good name in this world, and a blissful existence in the happy hunting grounds of the world to come.

The village was bounded on one side by the Missouri, whose bold surface, discoloured by the earthy substances with which it loads itself in its violent career, swept along the base of the bluff bank; and on another, by a deep lagoon, an expanse of clear water, fed by a creek, and filled with aquatic plants, which shot up luxuriantly from its oozy bottom, spreading their broad leaves over the placid pool, and decorating the scene with flowers of exquisite hue and perfume. In front, an illimitable prairie, covered with its verdant and flowery carpet, presented a long undulating line of horizon to the eye. The whole town was surrounded by a palisade, now entirely destroyed, beyond which were the corn-fields, where the women practised their rude agriculture, and which furnished a scanty subsistence to this improvident people during the gloom of winter.

The spot has been some time deserted, though hundreds of miles still intervene between it and the most advanced settlement of the white people. For the blight of the white man often precedes him, and the Indian recoils instinctively, even before he has actually suffered by contact with the race which has disturbed his fathers. The shadow of the white man falls before him, and the Indian, chilled by his approach, sorrowfully abandons the graves of his fathers, and seeks a new home in some wilderness less accessible to the footstep of the stranger.

The traveller pauses at such a place, to indulge that pensive

train of thought, which is always awakened by the sight of the deserted habitations of man. How sacred is the spot which a human being has consecrated by making it his *home!* With what awe do we tread over the deserted threshold, and gaze upon the dilapidated wall! The feeling is the same in kind, however it may differ in degree, whether we survey the crumbling ruins of a castle, or the miserable relics of a hamlet. The imagination loves to people the desolated scene, to picture the deeds of its former inhabitants, to revive the employments of those who now slumber in the tomb. The hearth-stone which once glowed with heat, is now cold, and the silence of death is brooding over that spot which was once the seat of festivity—the scene of life and action. Here the warrior trod, in the pride of manhood, arrayed in martial panoply, and bent on schemes of plunder and revenge. Here stood the orator and the hoary seer. Here were witnessed the sports of youth, and the gossip of old age. The maiden was here in the modest garb of youthful loveliness, listening with affected indifference, to the voice of adulation, or laughing away the hours with the careless joy of young hilarity; the wife was surrounded by the maternal cares, and the burthens of domestic life; and the child sported in boisterous mirth. Yes—it is the same feeling; few and simple as are the incidents of savage life, humble and sordid as his employments may seem, the wretched wigwam of the poor Indian is as much his home, as the palace of the Roman senator; and though the ruins of the one, from their superior magnificence, may excite more curiosity than the relics of the other, the shadow that rests upon the heart, as we linger among either, is equally induced by sympathy for the fallen fortunes of those who once flourished and are now fallen. It is difficult to analyze the sentiment of awe, with which we see the evidences of desolation, and repeat of a strange people, that "the places which knew them once, know them no more forever." Men are callous to the sufferings of the living, but few tread with indifference over the ashes of the dead, or view with insensibility the relics of ancient days.

All are gone. Some are banished, and others, as the Scripture beautifully expresses it, *are not;* the graves of the dead may be faintly discerned in the neglected fields, but the foot-prints of those

who have fled to other lands, have long since vanished from the green sward, and the deserted streets. It is thus with Nineveh and Babylon; it is thus with the strong castles of feudal Europe. The record of what they once were, lives in song and history; romance has gathered a few fragments, and entwined about them the fabulous creations of genius; but the eye of the spectator, seeking the traces of a vanished reality, finds only the ruins of mouldered edifices, and the bones of the unconscious dead.

Although we may find in such scenes little to satisfy a laudable curiosity, we still linger among them with mournful pleasure. There is something remarkably exciting in the contrast between the past and the present. Nothing seizes the imagination more suddenly, or more strongly, than a vivid exhibition of death or desolation, contrasted with possession, and life, and loveliness. All that once was, is gone, or is changed. We repose secure, surrounded by solitude and peace, where the warrior once stood at bay, and where danger beat against the ramparts, as the waves dash against the rock-bound shore. Where there was life once, we stand in the midst of death. The abodes of those who once lived are deserted, and an awful silence prevails. The reptile and the wild beast have taken possession of the spot formerly occupied by the social circle. The weed and the brier cover the dilapidated hearth-stone, and conceal the long-forgotten grave.

As we gaze at these things a feeling of sympathy is awakened in favour of the departed inhabitant; however unamiable his character, however fierce or wicked he may have been, the blast of desolation has passed over him, and the heart spontaneously yields its forgiveness to those sins and errors that have been punished, and the consequences of which sleep in the tomb with aggressor and the victim. We think of ourselves, and of those who are dear to us. We too shall sleep—our habitations shall be given to the stranger, or be swept away by the hand of time, our bodies shall be dust, and our spirits vanish from the sphere of human life.

We are growing serious. Let us return to the village, and tell our tale, lest the reader think us prosy. It was, in days past, a pleasant spot, to those who could find pleasure in the savage state. The Mahas dwelt here for five months in the year, which

the men spent agreeably enough in eating and sleeping, and the women in cultivating corn and beans for their subsistence in the winter, and in dressing the skins of beasts taken in the chase. The girls followed their mothers to the field, while the boys were trained to manly deeds by racing, fighting each other, and transfixing birds, bull-frogs, and small quadrupeds. During the rest of the year they wandered over those wide plains where the buffalo grazes, and the deer and elk are found; spending the whole time in hunting and feasting when the game was abundant, and in toil and starvation when it was not plentiful.

They were often engaged in war. The Saukies, a warlike tribe, were their enemies, and the fierce Sioux bands often harassed them. But they continued for years to elude their foes, during the hunting season, by vigilance, by rapid marches, and painful retreats; and to defend the village from assault, by their watchfulness in discovering the approach of danger, or their courage in repelling it, during the short interval of repose allowed them, while their corn was growing.

Many miles below the town, at a very conspicuous point on the shore of the Missouri, is a small mound which covers the mortal remains of Washinggasaba, or the Blackbird, a celebrated chief, who died some years ago, at this spot, on his way home. According to his own wish, he was interred, in a sitting posture, on his favourite horse, upon the summit of a high bluff bank of the Missouri, "that he might continue to see the pale faces ascending the river to trade with the Omawhaws." A hillock of earth was raised over the grave, on which food was regularly placed for several years afterwards, by his obedient people. But this rite has been discontinued. We know not how long a spirit requires to be fed: but it seems that there is a limit, beyond which it is not necessary for the living to furnish aliment to the dead. A staff, supporting a white flag, that marked to the eye of the traveller the site of this solitary tomb, and called for a tribute of respect to the memory of one whom his people delighted to honour, stood here a notable land-mark for some years, but is no longer in existence.*

The Blackbird was a person of singular capacity, and the

* See Appendix, No. XI.

greatest man of his tribe. He had an intellect, and an energy of will, which obtained for him the mastery of other minds, and gave him absolute power over those around him. They honoured his talents, not his virtues. Though an able, he was a repulsive man. He possessed an extraordinary genius, which enabled him to sway the multitude, and gain them over to his purposes, but not to enlist their affections. They clung to him with devoted fidelity—followed, served, and obeyed, with a superstitious obedience, which bound them to his person, but which was not love.

He ruled his tribe with arbitrary power, and permitted none to share, or to dispute, his authority. He had acquired the reputation of a great medicine man, who was supposed to wield a mysterious influence over the lives of others, and the nation stood in awe of him, as the supreme arbiter of their fate. Whenever he prophesied the death of an individual, the event ensued with unerring certainty; and those who counteracted his views, who disobeyed his counsel, or in any manner incurred his displeasure, were removed agreeably to his predictions, and apparently by the operation of his spells. No absolute monarch ever swayed a more potent sceptre. He possessed the power that the tyrant of imperial Rome could only wish for.

Such a mysterious, dreadful influence, quelled the wild spirit of the Maha warrior, who stood submissive, awed into silent reverence, in the presence of the despotic chief, and trembled even in his absence, if a rebellious thought spontaneously swelled his bosom. He was regarded as the friend of the Great Spirit; and it was thought that the Omawhaws were particularly honoured in having so remarkable a personage placed at the helm of their affairs. Many were the victims of his ambition. Whenever his keen dark eye fell in displeasure on one of his subjects, and the blighting prophesy was uttered, the unhappy victim from that instant bore a charmed life; he sickened, withered away, and sunk rapidly to the grave. But the power of the chief continued undiminished to the last; and the white people alone believed that they had discovered the dreadful secret of his influence over life and mind—a secret which even they dared scarcely whisper to each other. Such is arbitrary power—gained by long years of toil, and held up by painful watchfulness and sanguinary rule,

its harvest is distrust and hatred. Who would be great on such terms!

To the American traders, who were induced by the enterprising spirit of traffic to visit that remote region, the crafty chief was probably indebted for his dangerous power. It is supposed that they supplied him secretly with the most subtle drugs, which he used so artfully, that even they who furnished them, and thus courted his favour, by a sacrifice of principle most incredibly atrocious, remained uncertain whether he administered them directly as poisons, or employed them in the horrid rites of magic. Certain it is, that although capricious towards all others, he protected and countenanced the traders with unwavering friendship. He was true to them, and to the white people in general, under all changes of fortune or of temper; and there is always reason to suspect that a mutual kindness of long continuance, between parties so politic and selfish, is produced only by reciprocal advantage. It is said that while he compelled the traders to yield up to him gratuitously a portion of their goods, he obliged his people to purchase the remainder at exorbitant prices, so that the trader lost nothing by his rapacity. The Blackbird was a savage, who did not pretend to any civilization whatever, yet he seems to have made commendable advances in social refinement, and to have imitated very closely the most polished nations, in his political economy.

He delighted in the display of his power, and seemed on some occasions to exert authority for no other purpose than to show that he possessed it. One day, during a great national hunt in which all the tribe engaged, and which was conducted with the discipline of a warlike expedition, they arrived, fatigued and thirsty, at the brink of a flowing stream. They had been travelling over plains exposed to the sun, and destitute of water; and the sight of a clear rivulet of refreshing coolness filled the party with joy. But, although all were parched with thirst, the chief, to their astonishment, permitted none to drink but a white man, who happened to be in their company. He gave no reason for his conduct—a cold, peremptory mandate announced his will, and a sullen, though implicit obedience, attested the despotic nature of his command over his submissive followers. The painted braves,

fierce, wild, and untamed as they were, neither hesitated nor murmured at an unjust order, which, although it seemed the result of caprice, was probably intended to try their discipline, and to accustom them to obey without question.

There was one that loved him, and towards whom his stern features sometimes relaxed into a smile of kindness. One of our most popular writers—a lady whose own affections are so pure and refined as to enable her to describe with peculiar grace and felicity the gentler emotions of the heart—has drawn so true a picture of *the love of a father for a daughter*, that I shall not venture to dwell on "this development of affection." Even the callous savage felt it. He who had no tear nor smile for any other human being, was softened into a feeling akin to love, towards one gentle creature. He had a daughter called Menae, or the *New Moon*, who was the most beautiful woman of the tribe. The Indian women are usually short and ungraceful. It is with reluctance, of course, that we give our testimony against them; the use of bear's oil as an unguent, and the eccentric habit of riding astride, may have prejudiced us, so that we do them injustice; but historical truth requires us to say that we think them far from attractive. Our heroine was an exception. She had a face and figure of which any European lady might have been vain. She was taller and fairer than the rest of the Omawhaw maidens, and towered above them as her father did above the men. Her complexion was so light as to be nearly pure, and the blush glowed on her cheek when she spoke. Her figure was beautifully rounded, and her limbs of exquisite proportion. But her superiority was that only of stature and womanly grace; she claimed no observance as a tribute to rank, nor made any ostentatious display of her beauty. Her appropriate and euphonious name was given, not merely on account of the mild brilliancy of her charms, but in reference also to the sweetness of disposition which rendered her an universal favourite, and caused her to be received at all times, and in every company, with a complacency similar to that with which we welcome the first appearance of the luminary of the night.

Beauty always exerts an influence, for good or evil, upon the softer sex. No woman grows to maturity unconscious of a pos-

session, which if rightly used, is her richest treasure. It is that which raises her above her own sex, and gives her a transcendent mastery over the affections of man. A beautiful woman possesses a power, which, combined with an amiable deportment, and directed by honourable principle, is more efficient than wealth or genius. No man was ever formed with a heart so callous as to be insensible to its magic influence. It is a talisman as potent as the lamp of Aladdin, in the hands of one who uses it with modesty and spirit; but a deadly curse in the possession of a weak or vicious woman.

The destiny of a beautiful girl, is usually coloured by the possession of this fascinating treasure. It makes her the centre of a sphere, and creates an atmosphere around her. It has a controlling influence upon the formation of her character, which elevates her above, or sinks her below, her companions. The heartless beauty who lives for conquest, becomes the most insensible of her sex. Neglecting the appropriate graces, and solid accomplishments, which throw so many pure and hallowed fascinations around the sweet companion of man, she soon learns to feel the want, and to supply the absence, of womanly attractions, by artificial blandishments. Almost unconsciously she becomes artful, stoops to the meanest artifices of cunning and malice, and lives in a corrupted atmosphere of deception. The time soon arrives when the beautiful flower which attracted admiration withers,—and the stem which bore it is found to be composed of a common and worthless material.

But where the mind is sound, and the heart pure, beauty elevates the character of the woman. The admiration which she receives, even in childhood, softens her affections, stimulates her latent ambition, and gives her the dignity of self-approbation. The glance and the tone of gallantry, with which she is addressed, awakens the responsive sentiment, gives tone and grace to her manners, and brings out the energy of her mind. She feels her power, and assumes the dignity of her sex. A womanly tenderness and grace is seen in all her actions. Accustomed to admiration, she realizes that homage which poets feign as the heritage of her sex; and her brain is not turned by the idle breath of unmeaning compliment. Confident in her powers of pleasing, she

rises above the little stratagems, and sordid jealousies which appertain to the maiden state, and scorns to use any allurement to extort those attentions to which she feels she is entitled. Thus it is that beauty gives power to vice, and strength and gracefulness to virtue.

It is also true, that the possession of beauty is apt to improve those exterior graces, which are so important in women as to be almost virtues, though in fact they seem to involve but little moral responsibility. Neatness, affability, and politeness are indispensable requisites in the female character. The knowledge that we possess an enviable quality stimulates to its improvement. The woman who discovers in herself the power of pleasing, is apt to cultivate that which produces an effect so gratifying to herself, and so agreeable to others. Her ingenuity is quickened by encouragement. As the man who has a capital to build upon, is more apt to husband his resources, and to aim at great wealth, than he who having nothing to begin with has no expectation of accumulating a fortune—so the beauty has a capital, which encourages her to look forward to a desirable position in society, and induces her to study neatness, grace, and propriety.

I know not whether this philosophy holds good among the belles and beauties of the Maha tribe; I am sure that as things go in our own land, I am not far from the orthodox creed in respect to this delicate matter. Of one thing, however, there is no doubt: Menae was not only the most beautiful of the Omawhaws, but she seemed to feel the consciousness of her advantage, and to improve it with a skill, of which the unenlightened heathen around her had no idea. It might have been because she was the daughter of the head chief—or because she inherited a portion of her father's talents—but I am inclined to think it was because she was remarkably handsome. It will be perceived that I am high church in my principles as regards beauty. For one or all of these reasons, she was more neat in her dress, more graceful in her carriage, more sedate and modest in her conduct, more dignified and altogether more lady-like, after the manner of the Omawhaws, than any other young lady of that primitive nation—all which I am ready to verify.

Among the western Indians, girls are usually betrothed at a

tender age, but the daughter of Blackbird had remained free from any engagement. Great men sometimes disregard national usages which interfere with their personal convenience, and the politic chief of the Mahas might have kept his daughter free from any engagement, in order to be at full liberty to make for her the best match which his situation might command. And it is not unlikely that the awe in which the chief was held, by the general belief in his supernatural power, may have kept the other fathers of the tribe at a distance, or have induced a doubt in their minds whether a near alliance with their dreaded leader was desirable. Such, however, was the fact; she grew to womanhood as free as the antelope of her native prairie.

Menae had now reached her sixteenth year, and the young braves began to look towards her as an object of peculiar attraction. In her presence they reined up their horses, involuntarily seeking to display the action of their steeds, and their own horsemanship—or urged their canoes over the eddying waves of the Missouri, with redoubled vigour. Some of them improved vastly in the labours of the toilet, adorned their faces with an unusual quantity of red paint, and their necks with the claws of bears—and hung all sorts of glittering and gristly ornaments about their persons. Others exhibited the scalps of their enemies slain in battle, with more than ordinary ostentation; and the trophies torn from slaughtered foes became quite the fashion. They did not get to the exquisite refinement of wearing beards and mustaches—for the Mahas are a barbarous people, and the beautiful art of transforming the human face into the resemblance of those of the bear and the billy-goat, had not yet travelled so far West. They did all they could, to look fierce, and captivating—but all in vain. The New Moon moved gracefully in her orbit, shedding her beams alike on all, and not distinguishing any with particular marks of her approbation.

More than a year previous to the time at which our tale commences, a young trader had arrived at the Maha village. Naturally sagacious and expert in business, he soon became acquainted with the customs of the tribe, and acquired the confidence of the people. His appearance was prepossessing, his look was bold and manly, his speech prompt and frank, yet cautious and re-

spectful. The women called him the *handsome white man*, but the more discriminating braves designated him as *the wise stranger*.

He was one of the very numerous and successful class, who are chiefly distinguished for their faculty for getting along in the world, but who, in consequence of the possession of this one quality, receive credit for many others. Calm, mild, with an agreeable smile always playing over his features, Mr. Bolingbroke was universally considered a young gentleman of excellent heart; when the truth was, that the heart had nothing to do with the blandness of his manners. The secret of that uniform self-possession and civility consisted simply in the absence of passion; the heart never concerned itself in Mr. Bolingbroke's business. He was even-tempered, because he took no interest in anything but his own personal advancement; and as long as his affairs went on prosperously, there was no reason why a perpetual sunshine should not play over his features. He was courteous from policy, because men are managed more easily by kindness and stratagem, than by force; because it was more natural to him to smile than to frown, and because—it cost nothing. The world gave him credit for a great deal of feeling, simply because he had very little; for the less sensibility a man has the more he affects. He was ardent and energetic in his business, earnest in the pursuit of pleasure, and gay in company; but the observer, who had watched him closely, would have found that the only chords in his bosom which were ever touched, were those of self-gratification and self-interest.

The judicious conduct of Mr. Bolingbroke met its usual reward, and he was prosperous in trade. But as time rolled on, other traders came to the village, competition reduced his gains, and he began to see the necessity of adopting some expedient which should give him an advantage over his rivals. This was a matter of too much importance to be settled in a moment; therefore he studied it over for several months, smiling and showing his white teeth all the while, and banishing every shadow of care from his fine open countenance. He even squeezed the hands of his competitors more warmly than usual, strolled often to their wigwams, laughed with glee at their jokes, and seemed really to love them, and to take an interest in their prosperity. The result

of his cogitations was a conviction, that the most feasible plan for rising above competition would be that of wedlock—that of grafting himself upon a native stock, identifying himself with the tribe, enlisting their affections, and securing the influence of powerful friends by a marriage with the daughter of some leading person; nor did he hesitate long in selecting as the happy lady, the beauty of the tribe, *the New Moon*, the only and beloved daughter of the ruling chief.

The young merchant had more than once looked with a delighted eye at the graceful form of Menae, had spoken to her kindly when they met, and had paid her the homage of gallant courtesy, which beauty always exacts. She had received his attentions with civility, but without any appearance of being flattered by them. But now her quick apprehension discovered, that there was something in his manner altogether different from his ordinary politeness. When he met this brightest of all the stars in the galaxy of Omawhaw beauty, his eye rested upon her with a peculiar meaning; and he more than once stopped as if he would have spoken. How quick-sighted is woman in the affairs of the heart! She saw that the white stranger was smitten; and the conviction afforded her that mischievous satisfaction, which a pretty girl always feels, on witnessing the havoc made by her charms, when her own affections remain untouched. The white stranger had as yet made no impression on her heart. Some presents, of greater value than those which he had been in the habit of giving to the Indian maidens, convinced her of that which she had begun to suspect; and she whispered to herself in the exultation of a girl over the first conquest in which her feelings are interested, "The handsome white man loves the New Moon!"

Just at this crisis arrived the season for the grand hunt, when the corn having been weeded, the whole tribe abandon the village, and proceed to the great plains, where the buffaloes graze in vast herds—so vast that the novelist would be considered as giving the rein to his fancy, if he were to attempt to convey an idea of their number, which I leave therefore to be stated by the traveller, whose business it is to risk his reputation as a man of truth, for the instruction of the public. This is an occasion of great re-

joicing. For several days previous to the departure of the tribe, feasts were held, and councils assembled to deliberate on the route, to devise the plan of the hunt, and to suggest the necessary precautions to avoid the snares of their enemies. The elders of the tribe repeated the results of their experience, the orators embraced the occasion to win new trophies of applause, and while some were successful in these ambitious attempts, and gained the popular applause so much coveted by the stump-speaker, whether civilized or savage, there were many who

"In that unnavigable stream were drowned."

The traders were consulted in reference to supply of guns and ammunition; and the hunters made their contracts individually, for sufficient supplies of guns, gunpowder, and other articles, to be paid for in furs and peltry, at the close of the hunting season. Bows and arrows, and spears, were also fabricated by those who preferred the ancient weapons of their people.

It was on such occasions, that Bolingbroke had heretofore discovered his influence to be at the greatest height among his savage customers; who treated his suggestions with deference, in proportion to the amount of the favours which they solicited at their hands. In the wilderness, as in the marts of civilized life, people are never so kind to each other as at the moment when the relation of debtor and creditor is about to be created, and never less cordial than during the existence of that relation. Bolingbroke had found himself at one season, worshipped as the idol of the tribe, and at another, feared as its master; but by being alternately an indulgent creditor, and an unassuming friend, had retained its confidence. It was, therefore, with no small degree of chagrin that he saw his business about to be shared, and his influence divided with others. His convictions, as to the propriety of entering upon the honourable state of matrimony, became greatly strengthened by this new evidence of the evanescent nature of his popularity; and his love to the New Moon increased to a steady flame, as the propitious influence which this bright luminary might shed over his fortunes became clearly developed.

The councils continued to be held, and while the chief men were employed in maturing the weighty affairs of their little

state, the common people rejoiced exceedingly, and every leisure hour was filled with sport and feasting. The men amused themselves with various pastimes, such as gambling, dancing, foot-ball, and racing. The young braves were painted with more than ordinary care, and freshly anointed with the fat of the bear, from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet. Some gave themselves up to the affairs of courtship and gallantry—some showed off their horses and their horsemanship—others did honour to the chiefs and distinguished braves, by dancing before the doors of their respective lodges—while a few, ludicrously apparelled, moved about the village, exciting laughter by the performance of coarse feats of buffoonery. Men were seen wrapped in the skins of wild beasts, equipped with horns and tails, bellowing in imitation of the animals they represented, and proving that men and brutes are separated by a step as brief as that which divides the sublime from the ridiculous.

The criers passed through the streets, inviting individuals by name, in a loud voice, to feasts given by their friends, charging them at the same time to be careful to bring their own bowls and spoons; and again proclaiming on the part of the guests, that the entertainments were over, praising the hospitality of the hosts, and the goodness of the provisions; while others, again, published the resolves of the council, and admonished the people to hasten their preparations for departure.

At length, every requisite arrangement being complete, the women, to whom the prospect of such a journey is always gratifying, were seen rapidly moving about, assiduously occupied in packing up, and loading upon the horses, all their household goods, and personal chattels—pots, kettles, and children—provisions, tents, trinkets, and trumpery. It was obvious that they felt their own importance; their active motions, busy faces, evinced that, for the moment, they had broken through all the salutary restraints of discipline, and assumed the reins of government; and they even ventured to rate their husbands, and other unfortunate men who fell in their way, severely, for real or supposed trespasses, upon what they considered their peculiar province—as we are assured the ladies of another people, which shall be nameless, are accustomed to do, on certain privileged days, or when their liege lords intrude

upon them while in the performance of any household solemnities which they regard as inviolate. From all which it may be safely inferred, that the ingenious writer who had discovered that there is a great deal of human nature in man, might have added, "and in women."

The march of the tribe from the village presented a picturesque and beautiful scene. It was a bright summer morning. The sun was just rising over the rounded bluffs, and throwing his beams obliquely along the surface of the turbid Missouri. The prairie was clad in its richest apparel. The young grass covered it with a thick sward, which still preserved the living freshness and grateful verdure of spring, while flowers infinite in number, and diversified in hue, reared their heads to the surface of the grassy carpet, and reposed upon it, like colours upon the canvass of the painter. The whole plain displayed a series of graceful undulations—not hills and vales—but gentle swells and depressions, which, at this early hour of the day, received the sunlight at such a variety of angles, as to afford an endless diversity of light and shade, while it heightened the effect of the perspective, by throwing up a few points into prominent relief, and casting others, whose features were as distinctly visible, into an imaginary back-ground.

As the cavalcade commenced its march, a long train of warriors, on horseback, were beheld issuing from the village, arrayed in all the pomp, and all the dignity, of Indian display. Their faces were carefully painted in the best style, some gaily with a profusion of crimson, others lowering in the gloomy ferocity of black, while their bodies were adorned with the trappings of savage magnificence, and their heads arrayed in feathers of a variety of gaudy hues.

They were armed with the numerous implements of war and hunting—with guns, bows, war-clubs, tomahawks, and knives—and mounted upon active horses, with vicious eyes and untamed spirits, that evinced submission to the power of their riders, but not affection for their persons. Some rode without stirrups, some without saddles, and some with saddles richly ornamented. Their bridle-bits were of every variety, from the plainest snaffle, to the most powerful curb. The bridles of many were decorated with gaudy-coloured ribbon, tape, or tinsel, or with bits of tin, or pieces

of dressed deer-skin cut into fringe, or rolled into tassels; and many had adorned the manes and tails of their horses, while not a few rode ragged steeds barebacked, and guided them with halters.

Although in the appearance of some of these native warriors, the grotesque predominated, while extreme poverty was displayed in the equipment of others, there was observable in each, the same unconstrained air, and indescribable wildness, peculiar to this original people; and there were a few braves mounted on fine horses, well clad, completely armed and appointed, of sedate carriage, and military bearing, and whose whole conduct bore the decisive stamp of dignity.

They moved slowly; but here and there might be seen a young brave, urging his horse rapidly along the flank of the column, or seeking to attract attention by dashing off from the line of march, across the plain, at full speed, with his feet pressed in his courser's sides, his body bent forward, his buffalo spear poised, as if for striking, and his long plume of feathers streaming upon the wind. Behind the main body of horsemen, followed the women, the children, and the old men, a few of whom were mounted on lean ponies, but the greater part were on foot, trudging soberly along—except the younger ladies, who amused themselves with jeering any of the junior warriors, who happened to lag behind, or who was casually thrown among the non-combatants by the laming of a horse, or the loss of an indispensable part of his armament. Under the charge of this body of women and unsexed men, was a train of pack-horses, bearing the mats, skin-lodges, and other moveables. On the packs might be seen many a little urchin, too big to be carried on his mother's back, yet too small to walk, who enjoyed the high privilege of being lashed among the baggage, and treated as an article of furniture —where he sat—comfortably enough, poking out his dark face from among the packages, and staring with his little wild black eyes, like a copper-headed snake. With this part of the cavalcade, too, were the dogs, which, when not abroad on duty with their masters, usually seek the society of the ladies, and the agreeable atmosphere of the culinary department. Those in question, were particularly given to these loafing habits, and forever

stealing after the flesh-pots, and trying to curry favour with the women, who, heartily despising the sycophants, gave them more kicks than coppers. From their appearance one would not suppose their company was desirable ; for the Indian's dog is a lean, hungry, ferocious animal—a bad medium between the savage wolf and the civilized dog—who is but little respected at home or abroad, and sneaks about, with his bushy tail drooped, his pointed ears erect, and his watchful eye gleaming with a thievish expression of mischief and distrust. Resembling the wolf in appearance and manners, he seems to be obedient from fear only, and to have but little in common with the generous and affectionate animal who is the friend, as well as the servant, of civilized man, and of whom the poet testified, when he said, "they are *honest* creatures."

Leaving the village, the Indian train ascended a long gradual swell, until they reached a beautifully rounded eminence, that commanded an extensive view of the prairie, over which they were about to travel. Nothing could be more striking than this wild picture of native luxuriance, and aboriginal display. A wide expanse of scenery was spread before the eye. The interminable plain extended further than the vision reached, spreading out a landscape which was bounded only by the dim sea-like horizon; and there was something peculiarly picturesque in the march of the Omawhaws, whose long party-coloured line wound and undulated among the slopes and mounds of the prairie, headed by armed braves, and flanked by young horsemen, darting off from the main body, to show the speed of their horses, and displaying their own dexterity by a variety of evolutions.

When the party reached the most elevated point of the plain, it halted, and many a glance was thrown back towards the deserted wigwams. Not a living thing moved in the village, whose lowly huts, untenanted, seemed to form a part of the natural landscape. Beyond it flowed the broad and turbulent Missouri, on its journey of a thousand leagues, and further towards the East, was a range of low, pointed hills, whose sides were thinly clothed with timber, while their bald summits were only covered with a verdant carpet of grass. The newly risen sun had just appeared beyond these hills, lighting up their peaked tops with

the full effulgence of his splendour, and strongly marking the characteristic horizon of this peculiar country. Over this scene they gazed for a few moments with emotion, for some of them might never return to the wigwams of their tribe, and those who should survive might find their fields ravaged, and the graves of their fathers desecrated. Even an Indian loves his home. Erratic as are his habits, and little as he seems to understand or enjoy domestic comfort, he acquires, unconsciously, an attachment towards the spot on which he resides, and a reverence for the associations by which it is surrounded. This attachment is weak compared with that of the civilized man, but the savage feels it, though in a modified form, and with but a slight reference to locality. There are dear and joyful recollections connected with the fireside, however humble it may be, and the turf that covers the remains of departed friends, is sacred even in the eyes of the uneducated savage.

Bolingbroke was not a man to appreciate an interesting landscape, or to sympathize with a flow of tender feeling. He sat on his horse, apart from the others, and was calculating the probable advantages of an union with the daughter of the chief of the Mahas, and revolving in his mind the means by which he might most speedily bring about so desirable an alliance, when the Blackbird himself rode up beside him.

"Is the *Wise Stranger* sorrowful in spirit?" said the chief, "or does he mourn because the Omawhaws are quitting the graves of their fathers?"

"Neither," replied the politic trader; "the Great Spirit has not thrown any cloud over the heart of his white son, and the graves that we are leaving are not those of *my fathers*."

"Then why should the trader of the white people be sad, when his red brethren are going to hunt on the plains where the buffaloes feed?"

"I am thinking of something I had forgotten."

"Has the Master of Life told my friend in a dream, that he has failed to do something that he ought to have done?"

"Yes, my father; even thus has the Master of Life whispered to my heart, while my eyes were sleeping. I have seen my

fault. But I feel comforted by the reflection that the great chief of the Omawhaws is my friend."

The chief directed a calm though penetrating glance of inquiry towards his companion, but the countenance of the trader betrayed no emotion. It was evident that the offence was not one of deep dye. His eye wandered back to the cavalcade, and rested on the warrior train. The young trader resumed:

"My father has always been kind to me."

"The pale face has reason to believe that the Blackbird is his friend," replied the chief composedly.

"I have endeavoured to convince the great chief that I desire to serve him. I have no other pleasure than to make the Omawhaws happy, by supplying their wants."

"The white stranger has done his duty—I am satisfied."

Here a pause ensued, and these well-matched politicians gazed along the line, which was now beginning to be again set in motion—each endeavouring stealthily to catch a glance at the countenance of the other. The young merchant was the first to renew the conversation.

"In making my presents to the chiefs," he said, "I have endeavoured to distinguish who were the most worthy, and who stood highest in the estimation of the Mahas, by the value of the gifts which I made them. But I fear that I did not sufficiently recollect the high claims of Blackbird, who is elevated above all others by his wisdom, his many victories, and his friendship for the white people. I am a young man, and the Great Spirit has not been pleased to give me that wisdom which he reserves for great chiefs, whose business is to govern tribes."

As he said this he drew from his bosom an elegantly mounted dirk, a favourite ornament and weapon of the Indian, and as he presented it added:

"Will the head man of the Omawhaws accept this as a small part of the atonement which my negligence imposes upon me, and depend upon my word that in future I shall not forget the distance between a great chief and his inferiors?"

"The white stranger has been very properly called *wise*," said the crafty chief, "and the head man of the Maha people knows how to value his friends. I have looked back at our path—it is

all white—there is no cloud upon it. The white trader may depend hereafter, that I am his friend."

Thus saying, he eyed with complacency the beautiful weapon that he had received, drew it, and examined the blade—passing his eye along it with the keen scrutiny of one intimately versed in the mechanism and use of military implements; then having arranged it upon his person, with the true savage love of finery, in the most conspicuous manner, he rode away, muttering to himself, "What does the trader want in return for so fine a present?" He did dream that it was his daughter that was wanted.

In a few days they arrived at the pastures of the buffalo, and beheld the plains covered with herds of wild cattle as far as the eye could reach in every direction. It would seem that here were "*the cattle upon a thousand hills,*" that were shadowed out to the mind of the inspired poet. The animating scenes of the hunt commenced. Parties of hunters mounted upon fleet horses well trained to this sport, dashed in among the grazing herds. At their approach the buffaloes fled in alarm; the hunters pursued at full speed, each horseman selecting his victim. The swiftness of the horse soon outstripped the speed of the buffalo, and placed the hunter by the side of his noble game; when dropping the bridle, while his trained steed, continued to bear him gallantly along, maintaining his position side by side, with the buffalo, he discharged his arrows, or his bullets, into the panting animal until it fell mortally wounded. Then the hunter, quitting his prey, dashed again into the affrighted herd to select another object of pursuit.

It was an inspiring sight to behold the wide plain,—an immense meadow, studded with ornamental groves, covered with numerous herds, quietly grazing like droves of domestic cattle; then to see the Omawhaw bands, under the cover of some copse or swelling ground, covertly approaching from the leeward, so that the timid animals might not scent their approach in the tainted breeze; and, at last, to view the confusion occasioned by their sudden onset. On discovering their enemies, the alarmed herd, following its leaders, would attempt to move away rapidly in a solid phalanx; but the hunters, penetrating boldly into the heart of the retreating body, dispersed it in every direction—and the maddened animals

were seen flying towards all points of the compass, followed by the fierce wild hunters. The vicissitudes of the chase were numerous and diversified. Sometimes a horse fell, and the prostrate rider was saluted with loud shouts of derision; sometimes a large bull turned suddenly upon his pursuer; and burying his horns deep in the flanks of the steed, hurled him upon the plain; and more than once the hunter, thus thrown, with difficulty escaped being trodden to death by the furious herd.

Bolingbroke engaged with ardour in this sport. He was a skilful and daring horseman; and though at first awkward, from his ignorance of the artifices of the chase, he soon became sufficiently expert to be considered as an useful auxiliary by his companions. The warriors began to treat him with increased respect; and even the squaws, whose favour he had heretofore conciliated by timely presents, looked upon him with more complacency, after witnessing these displays of his activity and courage.

A daring horseman gallops rapidly into a lady's affections. The sex admire intrepidity, and give their suffrages decidedly in favour of a dashing fellow who combines boldness with grace and skill. Bolingbroke found favour in the eyes of the New Moon; and, though she carefully concealed her sentiments in her own bosom, he soon ceased to be an object of indifference. He was her father's friend, and she began to discover that it was her duty to admire his exploits, and approve his conduct. One day, as he was returning to camp alone from a successful hunt, he overtook the fair Menae, who was also separated accidentally from the company. It was an opportunity too favourable to be lost. As he joined her she threw her eyes upon the ground, and walked silently forward. He dismounted, and throwing his bridle over his arm, placed himself at the side of the Omawhaw beauty.

How awkward it is to begin a conversation under such circumstances! Among us, a remark on the weather would have furnished a theme for the lovers to begin upon; but these meteorological discussions were not fashionable at the Omawhaw village. One of Miss Edgeworth's heroes pulled a flower to pieces on a similar occasion, before he could open his mouth; but Bolingbroke was a man of business, and came at once to the point.

"The daughter of Blackbird looks upon the ground," said he; "she does not seem pleased to see the white friend of her father."

"The white stranger is glad because he has had a good hunt," replied the maiden, "and others seem to him to be sad, because they are not so joyful as himself."

"When I look at the New Moon," rejoined the lover, "my heart is always filled with gladness, for she is very beautiful."

"I have often heard," replied Menae, "that the white men have forked tongues, and do not mean what they say."

"Others may have lying lips, but mine are true. I have never deceived the Omawhaws. I speak truth, when I say that I love the beautiful Menae, for she is handsomer than all the other daughters of her tribe. If she will be my wife I will build a wigwam in the village of the Omawhaws, and quit forever the graves of my fathers, and the council-fires of the white people."

"The wise stranger would send a cloud over his father's house. How many of the girls of the pale faces are looking up the great river, to see him return, as he promised them?" inquired she archly.

"Not one! Not one! You are the only woman I have ever loved—I will never love another. Become my wife, and I promise you, here in the presence of the Master of Life, that I will never seek the love of any other. Menae shall be the sole companion, and dearest friend, of my life."

"I am the daughter of a great chief," replied the Indian maid.

"Ah! I understand you—you are too proud to marry one who is not of your nation."

"The roaring of the buffalo has made the ear of the white hunter dull. I am the daughter of a chief, and I may not give myself away."

"Lovely Menae!" exclaimed the trader, as he attempted to seize her hand; but she quietly folded her arms, and looked at him with composure, assuming a dignity which effectually repelled any further advance. She then addressed him with a touching softness of voice.

"There is a path to my heart which is right; it is a straight path." She paused; but her eye, which beamed softly upon her lover, expressed all that he could have wished. She added, "If

the white trader is wise, as men say he is, he will not attempt to gain a young maiden's affections by any crooked way."

So saying, she walked quietly away, while the politic trader, who understood her meaning, respectfully withdrew, satisfied that the lady would interpose no objection to his suit, if the consent of a higher authority could be secured.

Having taken his resolution, he proceeded to the lodge of the Blackbird, and endeavoured to conciliate the favour of both the parents of Menae by liberal presents. He adverted artfully to the advantages which would accrue to both parties by an alliance between the chief and himself, avowed his love for their daughter, and his decided wish to marry one of the Omawhaw tribe. He promised, if they would transfer their daughter to him in marriage, to treat her kindly, and to introduce no other wife into his lodge. He suggested that he had now established a permanent trading house at their village, where he should reside during the greater part of the year, and where he would be fully able to protect and support, both his proposed wife, and her kindred, if necessary. In return, he hoped the nation would give him the preference in their trade, and consider him as one allied to them in affection and interest.

To this very business-like harangue, which was sufficiently sentimental for the ears to which it was addressed, the parents made a suitable reply. They thanked him for his liberal offers, and were gratified that he had taken pity on their daughter; they would not object to the connection, and hoped their daughter would accept him. The mother added that Menae was stronger than she looked, and could carry a great many skins; and, though she was not very expert at hoeing corn, she was young enough to learn. The chief gave him the comfortable assurance that it was quite indifferent to them how many wives he might choose to have, provided he could support and govern them—for his part, he had had his own trouble with one; but he commended the prudence of his young friend in confining himself to a single squaw for the present, until he should become experienced in the inequalities of the female temper, and have learned the difficult art of ruling a household.

The parents retired, and opened the subject to their daughter,

to whom they magnified the advantages of the proposed alliance, with one who was, in their opinion, a greater man than any of the Omawhaws. His wealth exceeded that of all the tribe; his store of guns, ammunition, trinkets, and clothing, seemed to be inexhaustible; and they earnestly requested her to secure her own happiness, and advance the interests of her family, by accepting an offer so tempting.

The New Moon, though delighted with her conquest, thought it proper, as young ladies are apt to think on such occasions, to support her dignity by affecting some reluctance. In the first place, the gentleman's complexion was against him, and she would have given any thing—except himself—if it had been a shade or two darker. Then his taste in dress was by no means such as accorded with her ideas of manly beauty; and she regretted that he did not paint his handsome face, decorate his hair with the feathers of the eagle, ornament his nasal protuberance with rings, and cover his shoulders with the ample folds of a Makinaw blanket. Above all, he had never struck an enemy in battle; not a single scalp attested his prowess as a warrior; and although he managed a horse with skill, and had wielded the rifle successfully in the chase, he was as ignorant as a woman of the use of a tomahawk, or a scalping knife. Notwithstanding all this, she admitted that the white trader was wise—he was young, had a good eye, and a stout arm, and might, in time, with proper tuition, become worthy to be ranked among the head men of the Omawhaws. Upon the whole, she expressed her own unworthiness, her ignorance of what would be right on such an occasion, her willingness to obey the wishes of her parents, and to advance the interests of her nation; and as it seemed to be their desire, and her duty, she would marry the trader.

They were united accordingly, and the beautiful Menae entered upon a new existence. Marriage always effects a decided change upon the sentiments of those, who come within its sacred pale under a proper sense of the responsibilities of the married state. However delightful the intercourse of wedded hearts, there is, to a well-regulated mind, something extremely solemn in the duties imposed by this interesting relation. The reflection that an existence which was separate and independent is ended,

and that all its hopes and interests are blended with those of another soul, is deeply affecting, as it imposes the conviction that every act which shall influence the happiness of the one, will colour the destiny of the other. But when the union is that of love, this feeling of dependance is one of the most delightful that can be imagined. It annihilates the habit of selfish enjoyment, and teaches the heart to delight in that which gives pleasure to another. The affections become gradually enlarged, expanding as the ties of relationship, and the duties of life, accumulate around, until the individual, ceasing to know an isolated existence, lives entirely for others, and for society.

But it is the generous and the virtuous alone, who thus enjoy this agreeable relation. Some hearts there are too callous to give nurture to a delicate sentiment. There are minds too narrow to give play to an expansive benevolence. A certain degree of magnanimity is necessary to the existence of disinterested love or friendship.

The beautiful Menae was of a noble, generous nature. She had never been selfish; and now that her affections had an object on which to concentrate their warmth, her heart glowed with disinterested emotion. With a native ingenuousness of soul that had always induced her, even without reflection, to consult the happiness of others in preference to her own, she had now an object whose interests were so dear, that it was as delightful as it was natural, to sacrifice to them all her own inclinations. From the moment of her marriage, she began to adapt her conduct to the taste of her husband. She adopted his opinions, imitated his manners, and gradually exchanged the ornaments of her tribe for those which accorded better with his fancy. It cost her not a pang, nor a regret, to throw aside the costume which she had considered graceful, and had worn with pride in the meridian of her beauty, and to invest her charms in a foreign drapery, which was far less becoming in her own eyes. Whatever her husband admired became graceful in her estimation; and that which rendered her attractive to him, she wore with more than youthful delight. A similar change took place in her domestic arrangements. Instead of the rude wigwam of the Indian, Bolingbroke had built a small, but neat cottage, and had furnished it with

some of the comforts, though few of the luxuries of his country; and his wife eagerly endeavoured to gratify his wishes, by adapting herself to his habits of living. She learned to sit upon a chair, to eat from a table, and to treat her husband as a companion, rather than as a master. Hour after hour did she listen attentively to his descriptions of the habits of his countrywomen; and carefully did she treasure up in her memory every hint which might serve as a guide in her endeavour to render her own deportment pleasing to him to whom she had given an unreserved affection. From him she had learned to attach a name, and an endearing value, to the spot which he called his home; and for his sake she sought to throw every enchantment around the scene of their domestic enjoyments. With all that wonderful facility with which the female heart, when stimulated by the desire of pleasing, can mould itself to the wishes of another, she caught his opinions, and learned to understand his tastes—entwining her own existence around his, as the ivy clings to the oak. Her cottage soon became conspicuous for its neatness and beauty. She transplanted the wild rose and the honeysuckle from the woods, and trained them over her door, in imitation of the bowers that he had described to her. Her table was spread with the dainties which he had taught her to prepare; her furniture arranged in the order which he dictated, and all her household duties directed with the nicest regard to his feelings or prejudices.

And had she no prejudices to be respected—no habits to be indulged—no wishes to be gratified? None. She loved with the pure devotion of a generous woman. She had a heart which could sacrifice every selfish wish upon the altar of affection—a mind so resolute in the performance of duty, that it could magnanimously stifle every desire that ran counter to its own high standard of rectitude. She possessed talent and feeling; and to those ideas of implicit obedience and profound respect for her husband, which constitute nearly the whole code of ethics of an Indian female, she added a nice perception of propriety, and a tenderness that filled her whole heart. She had no reserved rights. In giving herself to her husband she severed all other ties, and merged her whole existence in his; and the language of her heart was, "thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Such

is the hallowed principle of woman's love—such the pure sentiment, the deep devotion, the high-minded elevation of that passion, when sanctioned by duty, in the bosom of a well-principled and delicate female!

The New Moon of the Omawhaws was a proud and happy wife. Her young affections reposed sweetly in the luxury of a blameless attachment. She had married the man of her choice, who had freely selected her from all her tribe. That man was greater than those around him, and in her eyes, superior to most of his sex. He had distinguished and honoured her. He had taken her to his bosom, given her his confidence, surrounded her with luxuries and marks of kindness.

Yet there were some thorns in her path; and, in the midst of all the brightness of her sunniest days, her dream of bliss was sometimes chilled by clouds that threw their dim shadows over it. Almost unconsciously to herself a sadness would rest for a moment upon her heart, and fly before she had time to inquire whence it came. There was a dark spot in her destiny, of the existence of which she was scarcely sensible, because she turned her eyes away from it in fear or in pride. A chill sometimes crept over her heart; but without waiting to inquire its cause, she chased it away, gazed again upon the bright vision of her wedded joy, and forgot that an unpleasant image had been present. Was it the occasional coldness of Bolingbroke, who, immersed in the cares of business, or abstracted in the anticipations of a future affluence, received the endearments of his wife with indifference? Or was it the estranged deportment of her tribe, who began to regard her as an alien? She knew not—she never permitted herself to doubt the love of her husband, and she prized the affection of others too little in comparison, to inquire into the ebb and flow of its tide.

The time, however, arrived when Menae began to discover that she had a difficult task to perform. Her husband was a trader, bent on the accumulation of wealth, by catching every gale of fortune that might chance to blow—her relatives and those by whom she was surrounded, were fierce and crafty savages, ignorant of the principles of justice, and destitute of any fixed standard of moral right. His interests and theirs were often opposed;

and while he was always prepared to reap the spoil of their labours, they were as ready to crush or to plunder him, whenever he happened to cross their purposes, or to awaken their suspicion. His popularity rose and fell with the changes of the season. A new supply of goods rendered him the idol of the tribe—an exhausted stock exposed him to insult and injustice. Previous to the annual hunt, or to a warlike expedition, he was flattered and obeyed by those improvident warriors, who, having made no preparations for such an occasion, were dependent upon him for the outfit which was necessary to enable them to take the field; but when the spoils of the chase or of battle came to be divided, and the largest portion was claimed by the trader in payment of his debts, he became for the moment an object of hatred; and it required all the power of the chiefs, and all the cunning of his own politic brain, to secure him from their vengeance. On such occasions he found his wife an invaluable counsellor, and an efficient friend. Her influence with the tribe was by no means contemptible. Her own popularity, and her ready access to the ear of her father, whom all others feared to approach, gave her a degree of authority among the warriors which she seldom used, and never exerted in vain.

But her influence was gradually diminishing. As Bolingbroke grew rich, he became more and more rapacious. The other traders were practising every popular art to recommend themselves, to destroy him, and to rise upon the ruins of his prosperity; and his vigilant wife more than once protected his life and property, by discovering the designs of his enemies, and secretly appealing to her father for protection. These things, however, did not disturb her peace. Vigilant by nature—accustomed to danger from childhood, and inured to all the vicissitudes of the savage mode of life—she could watch with composure over a husband's safety, and expose her own existence without fear. Perhaps, to one of her habits, the excitement of such a life was agreeable; and she certainly felt a pride in becoming thus important to him who was the sole object of her love.

But while she despised the machinations of her husband's foes, with all the disdain of a proud woman, it was not without uneasiness that she discovered a sensible diminution in the cordiality of

her own friends. She had married one who was an alien to her tribe, and such marriages always produce estrangement. They saw her abandoning the customs of her country, and throwing aside the dress of her people. She mingled but little with the women of the Omawhaws; and while she tacitly condemned some of their practices by her own deportment, she withdrew her sanction from some of their ancient rites by her absence. Her improvements in domestic economy were regarded with ridicule and jealousy. The young braves no longer regarded her with pride, as the beauty of their nation, but considered her as one who had apostatized from the customs of her fathers, and degraded herself by linking her destiny with that of a stranger from a foreign land. She felt that she, who had been the idol of the tribe, was sustained by the wealth of her husband and the power of her father, and not by the affection of those around her.

It was the custom of Bolingbroke to descend the river annually to St. Louis, for the purpose of renewing his stock of merchandise —and he had been married but a few months when the first absence of this kind occurred. On his return, his young wife received him with the utmost tenderness. He was charmed to hear of the discretion with which she had conducted herself in his absence, and to perceive the many evidences of the manner in which she had spent her time. He learned that she had lived a retired life, engaging in none of the public festivals, and receiving few visiters at her house. She had laboured incessantly in decorating their dwelling, or in fabricating such articles of dress for her husband as she thought would please his fancy; while she had noticed with careful attention the movements of the tribe, and gathered up every rumour, the intelligence of which might be useful to him in his mercantile concerns.

Another year came, and again he left her. His absence was protracted during several months, and within this period she became the mother of a daughter, which she nursed with the fondest solicitude. Her love for her husband, and her anxiety for his return, seemed to increase after this event. With her infant in her arms, she wandered out daily to a secluded spot on the bank of the river, where she would sit for hours, following the downward course of the river with eager eyes, to gain the earliest notice of

his approach. Estimating his feelings by her own, she was impatient for the moment when she could place the interesting stranger in his arms, and see him gaze with delight at that beautiful miniature in which each might see the features of the other. Nor was she disappointed. Bolingbroke caressed his child with fondness, and she was the happiest of mothers—the proudest of wives.

We must touch briefly upon the subsequent events of this narrative. Another and another year rolled away, and Menae was still the devoted wife, while Bolingbroke was become a cold, though a civil husband: he bending all his energies to the acquisition of wealth, she bringing in her diurnal tribute of love, and living only to promote his happiness. They had now two children, and when the time approached for his annual visit to the settlements of the white people, he proposed to carry the eldest with him. The wife, always obedient, reluctantly consented, and commanded her feelings so far as to behold their departure in mute, suppressed affliction. But, although one charge remained, upon which she might lavish her caresses, no sooner had her husband commenced his voyage, than her maternal fondness overpowered her, and she ran screaming along the shore of the river, in pursuit of the boat, tearing out her long glossy tresses, and appearing almost bereft of reason. Unable to overtake the boat, she returned disconsolate, and assumed the deepest mourning which the customs of her tribe impose on the state of widowhood. She cut off her beautiful raven locks, gave away her ornaments, and every thing that she had worn in her day of pride, and clothed herself in humble attire. Confining herself to her own dwelling, she refused the visits of her friends, and repelled their offers of consolation. She said that she well knew that her daughter would be better treated among the whites than she could be at home, but she could not avoid regarding her own situation to be the same as if the Wahcondah had taken away her offspring forever.

By degrees her remaining child began to absorb the entire current of her affections, and, on his account, she resumed the performance of her household duties, though she would not throw aside her mourning. One day, she had gone in company with

some other females to the corn-fields, adjoining the village, and was engaged in agricultural labours, her infant boy being secured, after the Indian fashion, to a board, which she had carefully leaned against a tree. They were discovered by a lurking war party of the Sioux, who rushed upon them suddenly, in the expectation of gratifying their vengeance by the massacre of the whole party. An exclamation of terror, uttered by one of the females, on discovering the enemy, caused the alarmed women to fly precipitately; and Menae, in the first moment of affright, was in the act of retreating with the others, when she recollected her child. To save a life more precious than her own, she swiftly returned in the face of the Sioux warriors, snatched her child from the tree, and bore him rapidly away. She was closely pursued by one of the savages, who had nearly overtaken her, when she arrived at a fence which separated the field from the enclosure surrounding the trading-house. A moment's hesitation would have been fatal—but, with a presence of mind which always distinguished her above other women, she gathered all her strength, threw the child, with its board, into the enclosure, and then, placing her hands on the fence, leaped nimbly over. Several of her companions were murdered, while she escaped, with her child, unhurt.*

After a longer absence than usual, Bolingbroke returned, bringing with him an accomplished lady, of his own people, whom he had married, but unaccompanied by his Indian daughter, whom he had placed at school. Menae heard this intelligence with the deepest sorrow, but with less surprise than such an event would have occasioned a wife in a civilized land; as the practice of polygamy, which prevails among the Omawhaws, had perhaps prepared her to regard such an occurrence as not improbable. She was stung to the heart, by the conviction that she had lost the love of him, who was dearer to her than all the world, and for whom she had sacrificed so much; and mortified that another should be preferred to herself. But the legality of the transaction, and its frequency among the people of her tribe, lulled, in some degree, the sense of degradation, and blunted the sharpness

* See Appendix, No. XII.

of her resentment. She considered the act lawful, while she condemned the actor as faithless and ungrateful. In secresy she wept bitterly over her disappointed pride, and blighted joy; but professed in public a cheerful acquiescence in the decision of her husband. The Blackbird was now dead; and the keen-sighted Menae could not blind herself to the conviction, that the decease of her father had rendered her of less importance to the mercenary trader.

Previous to the arrival of Bolingbroke at the Omawhaw village, he despatched a message to the trading-house, announcing his marriage, and forbidding his Indian wife from appearing in the presence of her rival. To this cruel mandate she submitted, with that implicit obedience which the females of her race are accustomed to pay to the commands of their husbands, and departed to a distant village of her nation. But what woman can trust the weakness of her heart? Conjugal love, and maternal fondness, both allured her to the presence of him who had so long been the master of her affections. Which of these was the prevailing inducement, it is difficult to conjecture; she longed to see Bolingbroke, and her heart yearned for tidings from her absent child, but without this plea, her pride would probably have forbidden her from seeking an interview with the destroyer of her peace. Unable to remain in banishment, she returned to her native village, with her little boy on her back, and encamped in the neighbourhood of her husband's residence—in sight of that cottage which her own hands had embellished, in which she had spent years of domestic felicity, and where another now reigned in her place. She sent her son to the trader, who treated him affectionately. On the following day he commanded her presence, and she stood before him, in the house which had been her own, with her arms meekly folded upon her breast, gazing calmly on the cold but handsome features of him, who was the lord of her destiny. Suppressing every other feeling, and avoiding all other topics, she enquired for her daughter, and listened with interest to such information as he was pleased to give her. She then, with much composure, desired to know his intentions in relation to the future disposition of both her children. To this question he gave an evasive manner; and directed her to accompany her

friends, who were on the way to the hunting grounds. She departed without a murmur.

Two months afterwards, she was recalled. She lost no time in presenting herself before the husband whom she still tenderly loved, notwithstanding his unprincipled desertion. Her resentment had in a great measure subsided, and rather than be banished entirely from his affection, she was content to share it with another, according to the usages of her tribe. Such she supposed to be his intention in sending for her, and she freely forgave the temporary aberration of his love, under the supposition that she would be to him hereafter, if not his sole favourite, at least a respected wife, that her children would find a home under his roof, and that he would be to her and them a faithful protector. Alas! how the heart, given up to the illusions of love, cheats itself with visions of future bliss! How often does the young wife build up a fabric of happiness, which like the icy palace of the Russian potentate, is splendid to the eye in the hour of its illumination, but melts away with the first change of the season! The New Moon hastened to her husband, full of hope, and newly-kindled affection; but bitter was her disappointment, when, after an austere reception, he demanded the surrender of her son, and renounced any future association with herself, directing her to return to her people, and to provide for her own support as she might see proper.

Indignant at being thus repudiated, overcome by feelings which she could not control, and alarmed at the proposed separation from her child, she rushed from the house with the infant in her arms, and finding a canoe on the river shore, paddled over to the opposite side, and made her escape into the forest. The weather was cold and stormy, the snow was falling, and the wretched mother had no shelter to protect her. Thoughout the whole night she wandered about in the wilderness, hugging her babe to her bosom, and keeping it alive by the warmth of her own breast. But, worn down with fatigue and exposure, and discouraged by her disconsolate condition, she determined in the morning to return, and, with the feelings of a wife and mother, to plead her cause before the arbiter of her fate.

Early in the morning, the wretched woman, faint, hungry, and

shivering with cold, presented herself before him, who, in the hour of her beauty, had sued for her favour. She, who had loved, and cherished, and counselled, and protected him, and who had higher claims upon him than any other living individual, stood a trembling suppliant at his door.

"Here is our child," said she; "I do not question your fondness for him—but he is still more dear to me. You cannot love him with a mother's love, nor keep him with a mother's care. You say that you will keep him for yourself, and drive me far from you. But, no—I will remain with him. You may spurn me from your own society, but you cannot drive me from my child. Take him and feed him. I can find some corner into which I may creep, in order to be near him, and hear him when he cries for his mother, and sometimes see him. If you will not give me food, I will remain until I starve, and die before your eyes."

There are those who have no feeling. The trader had none. Not a chord in his bosom vibrated to this eloquent appeal. A young and beautiful woman reduced to penury—a mother folding her infant in her arms—his own wife, the mother of his children—she who had cherished his interest and honour more dearly than her own life, and who would have endured any anguish to have saved him from a momentary pang;—with all these, and a thousand other claims upon his sympathy and justice, she was an unsuccessful suppliant.

He offered her money, and desired her to leave the child. Her blood rushed to her heart at the base proposal, and she indignantly replied—"Is my child a dog, that I should sell him for merchandise? You cannot drive me away; you may beat me, you may taunt me with insults, but I will remain. When you married me, you promised to use me kindly as long as I should be faithful to you; that I have always been so, no one can deny. I have loved you with tenderness, and served you with fidelity. Ours was not a marriage contracted for a season—it was to terminate only with our lives. I was then a young girl, the daughter of the head man of the Omawhaws, and might have been united to a chief of my nation; but now I am an old woman, the mother of two children, and what Omawhaw will regard me? Is not

my right superior to that of your other wife? She had heard of me before you possessed her. It is true, her skin is whiter than mine, but her heart cannot be more pure towards you, nor her fidelity more rigid. Do not take the child from my breast—I cannot bear to hear it cry, and not be present to relieve it; permit me to retain it until the spring, when it will be able to eat, and then, if it must be so, take it from my sight, that I may part with it but once."

The trader remained inexorable; he listened, with apathy, to the feeling appeal of his wife; but, finding her inflexible, and knowing her high spirit, he attempted no reply—coolly remarking that she might remain there if she pleased, but that the child should immediately be sent down to the settlements.

The affectionate mother had thus far sustained herself, during the interview, with the firmness of conscious right, and had successfully curbed the impulse of her feelings; but nature now yielded, the tears burst from her eyes—and clasping her hands, and bowing her head, she gave way to her grief, exclaiming—"Why did the Master of Life hate me so much, as to induce me to put my child again into your power?

"But, no," she continued, after a momentary pause, "we are not in your power—you have renounced my obedience—I no longer owe you any duty. I belong to a free wild race, that has never submitted to oppression. The pale face shall learn that the blood of an Omawhaw chief runs in the veins of his discarded wife. For herself, she has no wrongs to resent—but for her child she can strike the death-blow with as firm an arm as that of the warrior. My son shall not go to the fires of the white people, to be their servant, and to be insulted for his descent from an Indian mother. He shall not be trained up in the corn-fields like a squaw, or be taught to sell his honour for money, like the trader of the white Americans. I shall take him with me. He is mine, and shall never be taken alive from my arms. Attempt to separate us, and I will strike this knife to his heart, and then put an end to my own wretched existence!"

So saying, she darted away with a swiftness which announced that the resolution of her mind had imparted new vigour to her

limbs; while the trader, alarmed by her threats, abandoned his purpose, and suffered her to retire without pursuit.

Two weeks afterwards, a haggard female was seen slowly approaching a distant hunting-camp of the Omawhaws, bearing an emaciated child on her back. It was she who once had been the pride of their nation—the daughter of that dreaded chief whose word was law. She had wandered through the woods, thinly clad, and almost without food, subsisting upon such small game as she could entrap by artifice. At night she crept into a hollow trée, or scraped the snow from the ground, and nestled in the leaves. She had traversed the wide prairies, now desolate and snow-clad, on whose broad expanse scarce a living animal was seen, and over which the bleak wind swept with unbroken power. The wolf had tracked her footsteps, and howled around the dreary spot of her lonesome encampment. Without a path or a guide—ignorant of the intended movements of her tribe, and uncertain where to find them—exposed to imminent and constantly impending danger from cold, hunger, beasts of prey, and hostile savages—this intrepid female pursued her solitary way through the vast wilderness with unbroken spirit, trusting to her native courage and sagacity, and praying to the Great Master of Life for assistance. And who doubts that such a prayer is heard? Who can doubt that the same beneficent God who decks the wilderness with matchless beauty, and stores it with abundance, listens to the plaintive cry of the widowed mother and her innocent babe? How often do the weak and helpless pass unhurt through perils under which the bold and strong would sink, or endure privations for the support of which humanity seems unequal! And can we see this without believing that the same unseen influence, which tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, is ever ready to listen to the petition of the afflicted? and that those who seem most friendless and destitute are the favoured objects of the most efficient protection? Yes—there is a prayer that is heard, though it ascend not from the splendid edifices erected by pride or piety, nor clothes itself in the rounded periods of polished eloquence. There is a religion of the heart, and a language of nature; and God, who so organized the flower that it turns itself to the sun, to catch vigour from the life-giving ray, has

so framed the human bosom that it spontaneously expands itself to Him in the hour of adversity. She prayed to the Great Spirit, and he conducted her safely through the wilderness.

The Omawhaws had regarded the wife of Bolingbroke with coldness, when they saw her surrounded with affluence superior to their own, and considered her as an apostate from the ancient customs of her people. Their love for her was turned to distrust, while they beheld her in a foreign garb, and viewed her as the ally of the white man. But when she came back to them a destitute, houseless, deserted woman, they received her with kindness, restored her to the place she had occupied in their confidence, and poured out bitter curses upon her faithless husband. As she repeated the story of her abandonment, even in the softened language of an unwilling accuser, their indignant comments showed that they had made her cause their own. Bolingbroke was no longer protected by the mysterious power of the dreaded chief, his rivals had already supplanted him in the affections of the tribe, and his last offence overturned the tottering fabric of his popularity. The passions of the Indian know no medium—what they condemn they hate, and whatever they hate they destroy. The doom of the trader was deliberately fixed. It was unsparing and irrevocable. Him, and his household, and all that he possessed, were solemnly doomed to death and plunder.

The following morning Menae stood in a secluded spot, at some distance from the encampment, in earnest conversation with a young warrior of a bold and prepossessing appearance, whose hand was twisted in the mane of a fiery steed.

"You know the white trader?" said she.

"Yes, he gave me a blanket once."

"Was that all?"

"The first time that I went to hunt, he filled my horn with powder, and promised me good luck."

"Think once more. You owe a larger debt than that to the white trader."

"When my father was killed by the Sioux, and I was badly wounded, none of the Omawhaws took pity on me, for there was a scarcity in the village. You took me into your wigwam, cured my wounds, and fed me with the white man's provisions."

"You owe him your life."

"I owe it to you."

"To us both."

"I am willing to pay the debt. I have often said that I would die for the New Moon, and I am not unfriendly to the trader; I have eaten his bread."

"You can be secret?"

"The serpent, which has no voice, is not more secret than I."

"Go to the white trader. Let none see you depart—let none but him see you at the principal village of the Omawhaws. Tell him that Menae sent you—that she, who helped to build up his fortune, who has for years watched over his safety, now warns him of danger, and bids him fly to the settlements of his own people. Say that the spirit of my father has whispered in my ear that the Omawhaws have predicted the death of the trader. Tell him that I shall never see him again—I would not condescend to be his wife, or his servant; I would starve rather than eat his bread—but I should grieve to see the father of my children die the death of a dog, or the pale girl, whom he has chosen for his wife, suffering the penalty of his crime. He knows I would not deceive him. I have but one tongue—it has always spoken the truth. We walked together for years—I have looked back at my path, and find that it is white. Bid them fly to the fires of the white people, before another moon shall be seen in the place of that which is now waning. And say to Bolingbroke—to the white trader—that if he feels any gratitude to her who has more than once been a true friend in the hour of peril, and now saves him, and his new wife, from the rage of the Maha braves, he will restore her daughter to the arms of its mother. Let him do this, and Menae will forgive his faithless treatment of herself, and forget all her sorrows."

The young Indian bent his head, and listened attentively, as Menae pronounced these words with a rapid but distinct utterance. He then said, respectfully,

"It shall be done—though it grieves me to disappoint the Omawhaw warriors of their just vengeance. But the daughter of Blackbird was a mother to me, when I was a sick boy; I will be

a son to her now that I am a man. When I had no home, I slept in the white man's house; it shall not be burned over his head."

He loosened his hand from the mane of the young horse, on whose neck he leaned, and the liberated animal dashed away over the plain, snuffing the keen air of the morning, and throwing up the snow with his heels.

"Why turn your horse loose," enquired his companion, "when you have immediate use for his services?"

The Indian smiled, and said, "No man rides on horseback when his business is secret. My own feet will leave no track upon the frozen snow. I have a store of dried meat hidden in the woods, which I can easily find. Farewell. The grayest head among the Omawhaws shall not find my trail, nor discover my errand."

Shortly after this event, the Indians learned, to their great disappointment, that Bolingbroke had suddenly abandoned the village, with all his property, and announced his intention to return no more; but they never discovered the cause of his abrupt departure. On the next visit of the other traders to St. Louis, the daughter of Menae was placed under their charge, to be delivered to her mother, who received her child with the joy of one who had mourned over a first-born. She lived afterwards in retirement, seldom appearing at the festivals of the nation, and observing the decent gravity of a widowed matron—carefully bringing up her children after the fashion of her own people, and continually advising them to avoid the society, the customs, and the vices of the whites.

THE RED SKY OF THE MORNING.

A FEW years only have elapsed since the great lakes lying upon the northern frontier of the United States, were surrounded by vast tracts of silent wilderness, and navigated by the birch canoe of the native Indian and the adventurous trader. Within the memory of living men, the savage exercised dominion over nearly the whole of that vast region, and the bold or inquisitive traveller who explored those desert shores, endured the various fatigues and perils incident to voyages of discovery into parts unknown to civilized men. There was the solitude of nature as it reigns undisturbed by human enterprise; and there roamed, alike untamed, the savage man and the wild beast. Beautiful to the eye, and highly exciting to the imagination, were those broad lakes, and their magnificent shores—the bays, the islets, the headlands, and all the attractive features of a blended woodland and water scenery; but they were solitary and cheerless deserts.

The scene is now changed, as if by magic. Those inland seas are covered with the fleets of commerce, their bays and inlets are studded with villages, their rivers pour out a daily and hourly tribute of rich freights, and their waters are cleft by steamboats, whose ample size, beauty of model, and magnificence of interior decoration, cause them to be justly described as floating palaces. The hard hand of industry is at work there, and pleasure spreads her glittering wing in the sunshine. Wealth is there with her millions, and enterprise prolific of novel schemes, and daring undertakings.

Such are the wonderful changes which have taken place in all the larger lakes, but one. Lake Superior alone, remains surrounded by the silent forest, and the abodes of savage hunters; and there are permanent obstacles in the climate and topography

of this dreary region, which will long repel from it the footsteps of civilization.

In ascending the chain of lakes, the voyager, after passing the Sault de Sainte Mary, no longer sees the fertile lands, the rich green forests, and the attractive scenery which delight the eye, on the shores of the more southern and eastern of these Mediterranean seas. Around him are the rigours of a high latitude, and the desolate features of a sterile country. The shores are bold and rocky, presenting a series of naked precipices, which afford but little for the subsistence of man or beast. The scenery is often magnificent, and highly picturesque; but has no features of repose, of softness, or of richness. Gigantic precipices are seen towering upward from the water's edge, presenting the outlines of gothic architecture. Huge ramparts, arches, and turrets—shapes innumerable and fantastic, worn by the elements from the solid barriers of rock that skirt the shore, appear continually, to seduce the imagination, and surprise the mind, of the traveller. The general character is cold and cheerless, inhospitable and appalling. The wave beats angrily against a dangerous coast, whose scanty verdure offers little to please the eye. Now and then, the voyager is deluded by the appearance of a valley whose deep recess protects a rich growth of green foliage, but on steering his canoe towards it, he finds a narrow channel communicating with a small lake, or with a swamp. As he meanders the numerous bays, and the perilous capes, he finds a succession of the same grand and imposing landscape; the broad lake, the bleak precipice, and the dreary swamp varied by situation and outline, compose the elements of every scene.

Leaving the great lake, and proceeding still farther to the north and west, a boundless region is presented, of sterile, broken, and rocky country, intersected by rivers, channels, swamps, and small lakes—a savage wilderness of land and water. So numerous are the communications which connect these lakes, that the whole region may be traversed by canoes, in almost every direction; and the stranger, who follows his guide through the labyrinth, becomes bewildered by its intricacies, while he is awed by its vast extent, and dreary sameness.

The gloomy desert to which we have attempted to conduct the

reader, is greatly elevated above the level of the larger lakes, and the water courses which are navigated to approach it, are interrupted by numerous rapids and cataracts, some of which are said to rival the falls of Niagara in magnitude and sublimity. The navigation is therefore performed by means only of the light birch canoe, which is taken from the water, and transported on the shoulders of men, around such obstructions.

Here, at the summit level, and in the heart of this great continent, lie the sources of the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi, which thus rising together, twin offspring of a common fountain, flow off in different directions, and after roaming, each its thousand leagues, fall into the ocean at points separated by thirty degrees of latitude.

The winter, lingering in this high latitude, throughout more than half the year, covers the whole surface of land and water with ice and snow, locks up all the sources of vegetation, and drives the wild bird and beast to more genial climates.

The only human inhabitants of this inhospitable desert, are the Ojibway Indians, more commonly called the Chippeways, and to whom, for the sake of perspicuity, we shall apply the latter name.

No branch of the human family lead a more precarious life than this wretched people. Relying entirely upon the chase, and the wild products of the soil, for subsistence, they have no agriculture, nor any settled places of abode. They feast to excess when game is abundant, but make so little provision for the future, that a short season of scarcity reduces them to absolute want. Their most important supply of food is derived from the wild rice, which grows spontaneously in the swamps, and is gathered by the women in large quantities, but this bounty of Nature, so wisely provided to supply the population with food during the inclement season, is so improvidently used as to be quickly exhausted. The long winter finds them destitute; the animals constituting game have fled to more fruitful lands, and famine scowls over the desolated wilderness. The wretched inhabitants are now reduced to the most dreadful expedients—long and painful journeys are undertaken in pursuit of food—their dogs and horses are devoured—their moccasins and buffalo robes are chewed—and at last many sink exhausted by famine, or perish wretchedly in the great snow

drifts. Even these miserable wanderings are confined within the same inclement region; the more sunny plains lying to the south, to which the buffalo and deer retire, being inhabited by hostile tribes.

Although numerous, and scattered over a wide expanse of territory, the Chippeways have no national organization, and scarcely a semblance of local government. Here and there a few families are found collected into a band, ruled by chiefs; but the temporary bond which unites them is dissolved whenever food becomes scarce, when they scatter to the four winds like the leaves in autumn, each family relying upon its own exertions. The chief retains his office; an empty honour during the greater portion of his life, which is spent like that of the humblest individual of his people, in solitary and painful wanderings in search of the means to satisfy the cravings of hunger. But in the short and joyful season of plenty, when the rice harvest is ripe, when game is food in the woods, and the lakes are covered with water-fowl, the bands reassemble, and the chiefs taste the sweets, and the cares, of authority.

The numbers composing these bands depend much on caprice and accident. If a chief is successful in war or hunting, individuals seek his banner and adhere to him so long as fortune smiles; defeat in battle, or a scarcity of game breaks asunder the feeble ties which bind these communities together, and disperses them throughout the whole length and breadth of the Chippeway country. The chiefs retain the name and the respect attached to that station, and take their seats as such in the councils which occasionally assemble to celebrate feasts, or religious ceremonies, or to consider of the general interests of the people, while their actual power, as we have seen, depends on their personal good fortune and popularity. Unless, however, a chief be utterly imbecile or worthless, he is never entirely abandoned. A few relatives, friends, and zealous adherents who cling to their clan under the worst aspect of its fortune, usually reunite after a forced separation, and keep the name of the band. But there is a floating mass, who are Chippeways at large, and who are ready to march at any moment, under any banner of their nation which may be in the ascendant.

There was a chief* of the Chippeways, whose name was Notin, or The Wind, and who was descended from a chief of the same name, and perhaps from a long line of equally illustrious ancestors; for it seems to be a time-honoured maxim among all savages, that greatness is inheritable, and that talents for governing especially, are transmitted without alloy from father to son. We have never heard it asserted that the skill of the lawyer or physician, passed with his goods and chattels, to his heirs, but it is certainly held by a majority of mankind, that the son of a ruler is better fitted to bear rule, than a person of plebeian descent; and it is not until nations reach a high degree of refinement that this ancient fallacy, if it be one, becomes exploded.

Among the Indians, however, the rule of legitimacy is admirably qualified in practice, for whenever the next heir of a deceased chief happens to be a pacific or indolent person, some daring leader conducts the braves to battle, and rules the tribe in the name of the proper head man. Something of the same kind prevails in the best regulated monarchies, where, if the king happens to be an infant, an idiot, a sot, or a woman, the business is done by a substitute. But the Indians carry it a little farther, and if the heir be deficient in moral or physical qualifications, he is passed over, and the next of kin after him is selected; and if no suitable person is found in the family, then some successful warrior succeeds to the chieftaincy.

Our friend Notin held his sovereignty in the regular way. He had good blood in his veins and could recount the exploits of his forefathers, in their wars against the Dacotas, for several generations. He was married, moreover, to the daughter of the chief of another band of the great Ojibway stock; thus, with commendable prudence, securing to his own descendants, the advantages of a pure regal descent.

Neither was this leader destitute of pretensions on the score of personal merit. He wore a necklace composed of the claws of an enormous grisly bear, that he had slain in single combat; he had stolen horses from the British, the Americans, and the Sioux bands of the Mississippi; the scalps of his enemies graced his

* See Appendix, No. XIII.

lodge, and when dressed in full costume, he decked his hair with seven feathers of the war eagle, indicating the number of warriors he had slain in battle. He rode well, fished patiently, and smoked the great pipe with dignity and composure. He was expert in tracing out the lurking places of the otter and beaver in the small streams and secluded valleys; and when in summer he announced an intention to travel southward to the great plains to hunt the buffalo, the braves flocked to his banner, eager to engage in the chase under a leader of such repute; for in these expeditions they encroached upon the hunting-grounds of the warlike Dacotas, who often attacked them, and they desired to serve under one who could marshal them in battle.

Such was Notin, chief of the Thunder Lake band of the Chippeways, whose sway extended over twenty lodges, and who on one occasion had conducted a hundred horsemen upon a hunting expedition on the prairies of the Mississippi. He was, moreover, like the present king of the French, a careful man in his domestic economy, and was master of seven horses, ten dogs, three guns, and several steel traps to take beaver withal, which made him the wealthiest person of his clan; and he seldom appeared in public without a train of five or six young men, who followed his steps that they might learn the arts of the chase by his counsel and example, in return for which advantage, they always brought the game they took, to his lodge, and were ready to stand by him in his private quarrels.

In one particular, this distinguished chief was singular; and to the remarkable circumstance which we are about to disclose, does he owe the honour of figuring as the prominent personage of our legend; for, had he lived like the mass of his countrymen, like them he would have gone to an obscure grave, and his name have been preserved for a few generations only, in the ephemeral traditions of his people. But Notin was not like other men. He was one of the few who follow not with slavish subserviency the dictates of fashion, but take the rare and somewhat perilous responsibility of thinking for themselves. In most things he pursued the beaten track in which his ancestors had trodden, time out of mind. As a chief, he violated no law nor usage of his tribe; he smoked the same pipe which his father had used before

him—held it in the same position, and blew the smoke through his nostrils in the same way; so that the old men, struck with the resemblance, and with the filial piety, as well as the respect for public opinion which it indicated, were affected almost to tears, when they beheld him thus employed. It is by such concessions to the wisdom of past ages, that kings and rulers reign in the hearts of their people.

Some casuists would insist that a single departure from the settled usages of his race, by one who in all other respects conformed strictly with custom and public opinion, should be set down as a mere eccentricity, and not as an evidence of moral firmness, or originality of thought. We think differently; and without stopping to argue the question, maintain that Notin showed good sense as well as boldness, in taking the stand he occupied, in regard to a question of great importance to himself, and of no little delicacy as it respected his social and political relations.

The matter was this: Notin had but one wife. No other instance of the kind had ever occurred in his family, all the chiefs of the Thunder Lake band having maintained a plurality of wives, and practised a generous hospitality. Not only the head men, but every individual in the tribe, married as many women as he could support; and to have but one, was as indisputable a proof of being a poor creature, as it would be for one of our merchants to have no credit in bank. It seemed strange, therefore, that Notin, who was an excellent hunter, and as we have already specified, a very opulent personage, should content himself with a single partner.

It is not pretended that the Indians cherish the social virtues and affections to a degree so far superior to other men, as to require a numerous family circle, in order to afford them full scope; for fashion, always heartless and artificial in its decrees, may demand that which nature may repudiate. There are other reasons, no doubt, for the discrepancy between their notions and ours, on this very interesting subject, which it may be well to investigate. If marriage be honourable among men, who shall blame them for desiring to reap its blessings to the greatest practicable extent? And who shall say that an institution which

might be very inconvenient to us, may not be an exceedingly rational and pleasant thing at Thunder Lake?

Society has not reached a high state of refinement at Thunder Lake. Morning visits, promenades and soirées, are not in vogue there; nor do the ladies indulge in the expensive luxury of *shopping*. There are no auctions in that benighted region—no old pictures—second-hand furniture, nor cast-off jewellery, offered *very low*, to tempt the vanity and avarice of very economical and ambitious, and would-be very fine ladies. Silks and satins, Leghorn bonnets, and merino shawls, are wholly unknown even in the best circles of Thunder Lake. There are neither music masters, nor French masters, nor Italian singers, nor imported dancing girls, to be supported by the hard earnings of the indulgent father and husband. There are no societies to coax from the tender-hearted matron the pittances of time and money remaining unappropiated, from the more clamorous demands of dissipation and extravagance; nor is it the fashion for indigent young men to be educated by the contributions of indigent young women.

Marriage, therefore, in the pure and original state of that blessed institution, such as existed in the times of the ancient patriarch, and such as now prevails among our red brethren, is a very different affair from any thing which is known to more civilized communities. The aboriginal may marry once and again, without incurring the fearful responsibilities which rest upon the husband in our more artificial mode of life. A plurality of tender and beloved wives might enliven his fireside, by the manifold joys of connubial love, without the danger of making him bankrupt by their extravagance.

Men naturally do that which they conceive will best secure their happiness. All, except confirmed bachelors and misanthropes, admit the felicity and blessedness of the holy state of matrimony; and if this proposition be conceded, it follows, that as we multiply the causes and agents of wedded bliss, we increase the chances for happiness. If marriage be a source of comfort and joy unspeakable, can we doubt the wisdom of frequently adding new fuel to the genial flame, and keeping up a comfortable fire upon the altar of domestic love? In short, if the husband

of one wife be a happy man, would not he be thrice blessed, who should be honoured with the plighted faith of three?

The wife of Notin was beautiful. She was taller than other women of her race; her form was noble and commanding, and her countenance very pleasing. Instead of the vacant and sullen expression exhibited in the features of most of the Indian women, she wore a satisfied and cheerful aspect, and had an air of smartness which showed that she considered herself of some importance. Notin was very fond of her, and was strongly suspected of giving her more of his confidence than was usually conceded to the wives of the Chippeways—had such a thing been imagined possible among that manly race, he would have been considered a henpecked husband.

This couple had an only child, a daughter, who was called Misquabunokwa, or, The Red Sky of the Morning, who inherited her mother's beauty, spirit, and quickness of intellect. They who decry female beauty as mere vanity, are but superficially versed in the movements of the human heart. To speak of it lightly as an outwnrd show, as an ephemeral possession that blooms and is blighted with the passing season, may be very plausible, but is also very fallacious. The beauty of a woman is a substantial quality of such value, that there is scarcely a doubt whether it be not the pearl of price, the most precious gift of nature. It is the talisman of her power, the agent and the symbol of her sovereignty. Men not only admire, but do homage to it; they not merely love, but worship it. Wealth, intellect, and attainments sink into nothing in comparison with this power, which outshines, while it adorns and vivifies them all. It is so irresistibly attractive as to produce a powerful reactive influence on the character of its possessor. The beautiful girl soon becomes conscious of a power that elevates her above her companions. The love of admiration plants itself deeply in her mind; and the desire to deserve and win that tribute inspires her thoughts and polishes her manners. The ambition to please becomes a ruling passion; and no woman of superior personal attractions ever made that attempt in vain. Politeness and gracefulness grow out of the continual effort to gain approbation; unless, indeed, where the defect of mind is so great as to substitute arrogance and

self-conceit. Even the savage is unable to resist the fascination; and whenever a woman possessing to a high degree, the peculiar graces of her sex, rises above the mere drudge, and aspires to be the companion, the idol, or even the sovereign of man, she usually succeeds to a certain extent, and only fails of complete success from the want of the support of her own sex. One swallow does not make a summer, nor can one fair woman inspire a whole people.

The handsome wife and daughter of Notin were ambitious; and it was probably through their influence that no other female was admitted to their family circle, while their cheerfulness and assiduity threw around their fireside so many unwonted charms and comforts, that Notin, yielding to the natural indolence of the savage character, grew every year less active in hunting, and more reluctant to lead his braves to the war path. His people, while they still respected his person and office, began to follow younger and more enterprising leaders; and the women of the village failed not to throw out hints, in season and out of season, against the bad practice of having but one wife, and the sinister influence of handsome women over brave chiefs.

From the causes we have mentioned, or some other, the popularity of Notin declined, and as the season approached, when it became necessary to provide for the winter, the tribe began gradually to disperse, either singly or in small parties, until not more than a dozen families remained at Thunder Lake. These were the personal friends of the chief, who still lingered around him, though participating in some degree in the coolness which had infected the band. At last it became necessary that they also should seek a more suitable wintering place, and a meeting of all the men was called, to debate on the subject. After the pipe had been passed round, they sat some time in perfect silence. Then an old man arose and addressed the meeting:

"Brothers! In the winter the wind comes from the North, and is very cold; it goes to the South and gets warm, and comes back in the summer, melting the ice, and causing the grass and trees to grow. Thus we know that one end of this great island is very cold, and the other very hot. There is no place that is

pleasant all the year round, except that happy land to which the spirits of good men go after death.

"Brothers, listen! We do not know why the Master of Life made it so, but we know that summer is gone and winter is coming. The Great Spirit has taught the brutes to fly from the North wind, and to hide themselves when the storm spirits are let loose upon the earth.

"Brothers, look around! The water fowl have left the lakes and islands where they hatched their young. They have risen up in great flocks, and fill the air like clouds. They are screaming for joy because they see a bright land, far off, where they can get plenty to eat, for the waters there will not be frozen in the winter.

"Let us be wise like the buffaloes, that have gone to the green pastures of the Missouri, and the water fowl that have fled to the quiet lakes of a sunny land. Let us take pity on our women and little children, and carry them to the great plains, where there is game to feed upon.

"Brothers! I have spoken."

This speech was well received. A grunt of approbation followed each sentence, and at the close they all drew a long breath, as if each felt relieved of his own doubts.

Then Notin took the pipe slowly from his mouth, letting the bowl of it fall quietly into his left hand, and blowing the smoke out deliberately through his nostrils, like one who was in deep thought. He raised his eyes and looked around upon the company. All were silent, for they knew the chief was about to speak. He laid aside the pipe and arose, threw the blanket from his right shoulder, so as to leave his right arm bare, and then drew it closely around him. His attitude was graceful and commanding, and his figure such as an artist would have chosen to study. He spoke in a loud, clear voice, looking round upon the whole assemblage, as if addressing himself to each in turn. He said:

"My children! I have listened to my brother who has just sat down. He is an old man. The snow has fallen so often on his head, that it has turned white. He is like a tree covered with frost. He is wiser than I am; listen to his words. I would not

thrust my fingers in the ears of my people to stop them against the counsels of that aged brave.

"Children and brothers! Let every one think for himself; the Great Spirit whispers to the heart of every man, and tells him what he should do. Let us all obey Him.

"My friends! The Great Spirit does not often visit his red children in the daytime; he comes in the night and whispers to us while we sleep. Foolish men do not know his voice. They do not know when the Master of Life speaks to them, because they do not see him.

"Listen to me! Last night as I slept in my lodge I had a dream. I heard a sound like the tramping of a great herd of buffalo, and I was troubled to know what it meant. I tried to rise, but could not. Then I heard a voice which said, 'Go not to the buffalo plains; your band is scattered, and there are not enough left to make battle against the Dacotas. They are watching for you in great numbers, and if you go to their hunting grounds they will slay your wives and children.'

"The voice ceased. Again, I heard a loud noise, like the roaring of the north wind, and the dashing of waves against the rocks. That sound died away like the first. I listened to hear the voice speak again. I did not hear that voice any more; but I saw a place on the shore of the great lake—a cove sheltered from the winds, where the water was deep and still. I saw the fish playing in the water. They were very large fish, and were so many that they had scarcely room to turn. I knew the place, for I had been there.

"Listen! I know it is not right to tell our dreams. The Master of Life is angry when we repeat what he has whispered into our hearts in our sleeping moments, and therefore our fathers have admonished us that if we repeat our dreams they will not come to pass. But I have told mine, because it was given me as a chief for the use of my children, and I hope the Good Spirit will not be angry, for the voice said, 'Tell your people not to go to the land of the Dacotas—they are numerous as the leaves on the trees, and are now painted for war, and looking with angry eyes towards the North.'

"Children and Friends! I am not afraid of the Dacotas. I

have struck four of their best braves—their scalps hang in my lodge. When they hear the war-whoop of Notin they tremble; even their horses scent me afar off, and snort when they discover me coming. But I dare not disobey the Great Spirit. Let every man do as he thinks best. If any choose to go with me, I shall be glad to have them in my company.

"I have said all I have to say."

The chief resumed his seat, and for some time they all sat in silence. Notin then threw the ashes from his pipe, arose, and gathered his blanket around him. The braves also arose, and retired.

When the council was broken up, the braves collected in little groups, and seemed to be consulting what to do; but their exchange of opinions was more by looks and hints than by conversation.

One said, "It is better to live on deer and bear meat than fish."

Another responded, "If one has a dream it is right for him to go by it—for my part, I have not had any dream."

A third exclaimed, "A man who has but one wife is easily provided for; I have three wives, and cannot depend on catching fish."

Others said, "It is very unlucky for men to tell their dreams."

So they separated and went to their lodges.

The next day the whole band was in motion, and it was evident that no community of feeling or purpose prevailed among them. They moved off in small parties in a southwardly direction, but apparently by different paths; and at the close of the day, the lodges were all deserted, and not a living thing was seen to stir in the village.

Notin with his wife and daughter embarked in a birch canoe, taking with them all their moveables, and proceeded towards Lake Superior. The weather was already cold, and they were much exposed to its inclemency, but they persevered, and at length reached that noble inland sea, upon whose banks they sought a resting place. Slowly meandering the sinuosities of the northern shore, they kept on their way, sometimes stopping to catch fish, or to seek food on the land, but more frequently com-

pelled by the fierce blasts to shelter themselves from its violence. Once when the storm raged violently, they steered their frail bark into the mouth of a small river, where they found a harbour surrounded by cliffs which protected it on all sides from the winds, while a grove of large trees, which grew upon a strip of rich alluvion that margined the water, added a further shelter. The storm raged for several days, and while the lake was white with foam and the surges beat angrily against the shore, our weather-bound travellers found a secure retreat, by the margin of a deep and unruffled pool, abounding in the finest fish, and affording ample means of subsistence.

Delighted with this spot, and wearied with the laborious and perilous navigation of the lake shore, the wife of Notin insisted on taking up their residence here for the winter. Notin urged his dream, and spoke sadly of the evil consequences which never failed to result from disobedience of the Great Spirit, who sent good birds to whisper into the ears of his children, and gave them dreams to fill their hearts with right thoughts. His wife and daughter considered the dream already fulfilled, and were certain they had found the very spot indicated. If our worthy chief had been blessed with a plurality of wives, they would have differed in opinion, and he would have pursued the dictates of his own judgment, but as he had but one, her influence shook the convictions of his mind. Meanwhile the storm continued; it was impossible to navigate the lake, and equally so to traverse the rocky and broken shore, covered with snow, which was not yet frozen sufficiently to bear the weight of a man. The women began to build a lodge, which was soon completed, and when at last the winds lulled, the family were so snugly housed, that they were all alike unwilling to move. They were secure of a present subsistence, and this is no small matter to the Indian, whose precarious life is a succession of feasting and want, and who is often driven to such dreadful extremity of hunger, that the prospect of famine, though familiar, is very appalling. To him the possession of food brings relief from every care, for when not engaged in war, eating and sleep are the business and amusement of his life. Various causes therefore combined to induce Notin to remain at the spot thus accidentally chosen.

Weeks rolled away without any material change in the circumstances of the family. The supply of fish continued abundant, and the remains of the jerked meat and wild rice which had been preserved for winter, added an occasional variety to their simple meals. Notin occasionally went out to hunt, with little success, except that once he accidentally found a moose, and at another time a bear.

Winter was now completely set in. The lake, as far as the eye could reach, was covered with masses of ice, jammed and heaped up by the wind, and then covered with snow. The snow clothed the precipices and lay deep in the valleys. Nothing else was seen except the leafless trees, and the bare sides of the tall cliffs. When the sun shone it lighted up a magnificent scenery, gorgeous and gigantic in its proportions and effect—a wide and vast landscape embracing mountains of snow, parapets of ice, and cliffs of towering height, all white and shining with resplendent brightness. After a night of intense cold, the forest trees were often seen loaded with crystals of frost, incrusting every bough and twig; and the whole landscape, as the first beams of the morning sun fell upon it, glowed with refulgent splendour. But all that beauty and magnificence faded away when the glorious light of the sun, which brightened it into existence, was obscured by clouds, and the fierce wind came howling over the bleak and dreary wilderness. Then the bright hues that gladdened the eye, and spread out a thousand fanciful and illusive shapes, were all melted away; the huge barriers of rock whose bold outlines and gorgeous livery of light and shade threw out the shapes of arches, spires, and battlements, were sobered down into the realities of cliff and chasm. But under all changes, these wild scenes were cold and terrific. They were the dwelling place of winter. The storm-clouds brooded upon the savage desert; the winds gathered here as if to collect their powers, and swept hence upon their errand of destruction.

The scenic beauties of this inhospitable region are, however, but little known, as they are seldom beheld except by the unimaginative Indian, who has neither heart nor eye for the sublime and beautiful of Nature, except in a few rare instances, when natural phenomena become connected with his wants, his perils,

or his superstitions. At the spot under our contemplation, three of these lonely beings, protected only from the intense cold of the 46th degree of northern latitude, by a frail lodge composed of bark, and separated from all their species by immeasurable and impassable tracts of wilderness, dragged out a cheerless existence, destitute of every social and intellectual enjoyment, and possessing barely the scanty means of sustaining animal life.

But they did not remain the sole tenants of this wild retreat. One day they were surprised by the appearance of three squalid men at the entrance of their lodge, who, according to the Indian custom, seated themselves before the fire. The parties exchanged glances, but not a word was spoken. The women placed food before the strangers, who devoured it with the rapacity of persons who had long fasted. Famine and exhaustion were painfully stamped upon their features. Their limbs were attenuated, their forms wasted and bent, their eyes sunk and heavy. The forlorn wanderers were recognized to be a distinguished Chippeway brave and his sons, all men of athletic frame and high spirit, though now emaciated by extreme suffering, into mere skeletons. Having eaten, salutations were exchanged, and they recited their adventures. They were the remains of a small party, who had improvidently lingered about their summer haunts until the winter overtook them. When their small store of provision was exhausted, and the game in their vicinity destroyed, they attempted to fly from famine. No permanent relief could be expected short of several hundred miles, and this fearful journey was undertaken, in the depth of winter, through a pathless wilderness.

Credulity would be startled, and humanity shocked by a recital of all the painful vicissitudes endured by these unhappy travellers. Relying upon the chance supplies of food afforded by a barren district, covered with snow, they were reduced to the most piteous straits. They devoured their worn-out horses and famished dogs, and then sought to glean a subsistence from berries, and the bark of trees. Now and then a lost and half-starved animal, thrown like themselves into a false position, afforded them a chance repast, and again days were passed in abstinence. In some exposures they found the snow not sufficiently frozen to bear them, and then they trudged heavily on

snow shoes. Cold, rain, snow, and piercing blasts alternately assailed them. Under all these appalling difficulties, these Indians, naturally indolent and fickle, proverbially deficient in enterprise and industry, pressed onward with patience and fortitude, in moody silence.

There was a point, however, beyond which exhausted Nature could no longer struggle. One after another sunk under the accumulated pressure of hunger and fatigue, until at last, of twelve souls, the leader of the party and his two sons only survived; and when these helpless wanderers espied the smoke rising from Notin's camp, it was with difficulty that they rallied sufficient strength to reach it.

After the new comers were somewhat recruited, they constructed a lodge for themselves, and made their arrangements to spend the winter at this spot. For a while, things went on smoothly, but at length the supply of fish became short; the fishing sometimes yielded but one meal a day, and often not so much. The hunters extended their excursions to considerable distances, but usually returned without any game—for what living thing could endure the rigours of such a winter! All, all had fled to a more genial clime, or were hybernating in caves and secret hiding places; and as these isolated human beings wandered through the dreary waste, eagerly searching every den and covert, they became more and more convinced that they were the only living tenants of this vast solitude.

At last, the dreadful signs of famine, known by sad experience to all of this devoted little party, began to become manifest, and those expedients for sustaining life which are only adopted as a last resort, were reluctantly employed. They chewed their moccasins, they boiled their dried skins, the bones that had been cast away were carefully collected—every atom that contained nutrition was sedulously gathered.

In this new emergency, Notin lost his self-possession. A despondency crept imperceptibly over him. This feeling, which sometimes assails the most vigorous minds, is not uncommon among the savages, whose crude and misty superstition, looking to no natural system of causes and effects, but referring events to good or bad luck, or to the agency of friendly or malign spirits, they

easily imagine themselves doomed to destruction, and shrink from a contest with unseen influences, which they dread, but know not how to propitiate. Often without any apparent cause, without the consciousness of having given offence to the Great Spirit, or to any of the numerous manitoes who watch over mankind for good or evil, the Indian finds his exertions palsied by some invisible hand, and every effort of courage, or of wisdom, rendered abortive. His arm becomes powerless, and the bold heart of the warrior no longer beats in his bosom. The fickle breath of a woman is in his nostrils. If he goes out to hunt, the game scent him afar off, and fly at his approach. If he sets his traps for beaver, a foul spirit sits down beside them, to warn those sagacious animals of their danger. Believing himself engaged in a fruitless war, against an adverse destiny, yet stripped of the ordinary powers of manhood, he sinks into that hopeless apathy with which all of his race meet the approach of death—the apathy of the Heathen, unconscious of sin, ignorant of redemption, and viewing the dissolution of the body as a painful change, which like other pains he is taught to bear with indifference.

Under the influence of such prejudices, Notin was at no loss to discover causes for his ill fortune. He fancied that he had offended the Great Spirit, by disclosing a dream, which should have been kept sacred in his own breast, and by not following out the indications of the vision, according to his own convictions. He looked back with contrition to the dispersion of his band, which, though not an uncommon occurrence, he attributed in this instance to his own departure from the customs of his people, and neglect of the will of the good spirits. To all the remonstrances therefore of his wife, who alone ventured to touch upon a subject so delicate and serious, he replied: "Trouble me not. The Master of Life is angry at Notin. When he smiles the trees become green, and the grass grows upon the plains; when he shuts his eyes and blows his cold breath upon the earth, the leaves fall, and living things die. He is mad at Notin. He has taken the man's heart out of my breast and given me the heart of a little child. He will soon take the breath out of my body, and send my spirit away to some other land, I know not where."

The wife of Notin, being a woman of bold spirit, was not

easily discouraged. Departing from the lodge, one evening,* she repaired to a thicket hard by, where she spent the greater part of the night in prayer. No one followed her: and if any surprise was excited by her absence, her family were either induced by confidence in her sagacity to suppose she was engaged in some effort for their relief, or were withheld by superstition from intruding on her privacy.

In the morning she had crawled back, and sat, emaciated with long fasting and chilled with cold, over the embers that glowed in the centre of the lodge; on the opposite side, couched in an abject posture, was the dejected chief, while the daughter sat between them. There was nothing to eat, no employment to engage their attention, no instant danger to arouse them to exertion. A wretched family they were; but no tears were shed, no complaint was uttered; theirs was not the acute grief that breaks up the fountains of life, and pours itself out in a flood of lamentations, but the patient sorrow that congeals the vital energies into torpor. The chief, a gloomy hypochondriac, and the women exhausted by fatigue of body and mind, they were all pinched with cold, and perishing of famine. Their eyes, half closed, were bent stupidly on the feeble light that seemed expiring as rapidly as their own lives. The wife at length spoke to her husband, thus: "Listen to my words. The Great Spirit is not angry with us any more. Last night I prayed to him to take pity on us. I told him we were dying for want of food, and asked him to give us something to eat. As I prayed, sleep fell on my eyes, and I beheld a place not far distant, where there is a hole in the earth, filled with brushwood, and covered over with snow. Under that brush I saw a large bear. Then I thanked the Great Spirit, and said I will go and tell Notin. He will be glad to hear that the Great Spirit is not angry with him any longer."

The chief supposed his wife to be raving, and cast an inquiring glance towards her. Her countenance was calm; he knew she had been absent for several hours; and he had confidence in her sagacity, as well as in her attachment. There is no faith so strong as that of the husband, in a wife whose actions and thoughts have

* See Appendix, No. XIV.

been known to him through a series of years, whose virtues have been tried by many vicissitudes, and whose love has stood the test of every ordeal to which it could be brought in the endless circle of human depravity, passion, suffering, and temptation. For twenty years she had been the companion of his prosperous and adverse fortunes; had followed his footsteps through perilous wanderings, through hostile lands, through pestilence, war, and famine, and had never faltered; wherever he led the way she walked with the courage of one who knew no fear; whatever he commanded, that she did with the devotion of one who knew no law but his will, no impulse but love for him.

Such was the being whose voice now came over the withering spirit of the chief like the breath of spring upon the chilled earth. He raised his head languidly and said,

"Woman, are you jesting? Or has any one given you the strong water of the white man?"

She replied, "When did I ever tell you a lie? I am in earnest. An evil manito has pursued and would have destroyed us; but the Master of Life has heard my cry and taken pity on us. Take your gun, and let us go to the place where food is provided for us."

Notin, like a wise man, followed the advice of his wife. He took his gun, tomahawk, and hunting knife, and went with her, their daughter accompanying them in silent wonder. The spot was readily found, but it cost them much labour, weak as they all were, to remove the snow and brush. At length Notin stooped down, and having examined the spot, exclaimed, "It is true! I smell a bear! The Great Spirit has not deceived us!" Upon a further search, they found the animal, imbedded in his lair, in a state of torpidity; and we need scarcely add that it was soon despatched, and carried in triumph to the camp.

From what source the wife of Notin derived the information on which she acted with such promptitude and success, we shall not pretend to decide. Whether, having accidentally discovered the hidden treasure, she used the information in the manner best calculated to relieve the diseased mind of her husband, as well as to sustain her own influence; whether the prayers which she addressed to the unknown God, ignorantly, but in a believing spirit, found

acceptance at the Throne of Grace; or whether, imposed upon herself, by a supposed vision, she was led to use the means which were successful through a happy coincidence,—are points on which others may speculate; it is enough for us to relate the facts.

Delivered from the distemper of the mind, which had benumbed his faculties, Notin became comparatively a happy man. The temporary supply of food, so unexpectedly procured, invigorated and inspirited the whole party, and gave renewed activity to their fishing and hunting excursions; and these efforts, with a few fortuitous supplies, carried them through the winter. In the spring they repaired their canoes, and previously to joining the band at Thunder Lake, proceeded to the trading establishment at Fond du Lac, where they purchased guns, ammunition and other necessaries, for which they agreed to pay with the proceeds of the summer and autumn hunting.

We return now upon the thread of our story, to speak of the three persons who last became members of this little band. The father was a Chippeway brave, who had so well proved his courage and address, that he was often chosen to lead parties of his people in their war or hunting expeditions. Both of his sons were tall and finely formed; they were well trained in manly exercises, and had already been tried upon the war path. They were alike excellent models of savage beauty, exhibiting in their persons those prominent and exquisitely moulded features, well-turned limbs, and graceful attitudes, of which so many instances are seen among this singular race; but the elder, who was called Ka-kaik, the Hawk, had a stern and vindictive expression of countenance, while the younger, Mehkenauk, the Turtle, had a face which indicated cheerfulness and candour.

These young men became mutually smitten with the charms of the "Red Sky of the Morning;" and each, jealous of the other, endeavoured to conceal his attachment from all except its object, with whom he lost no opportunity of secretly ingratiating himself. The solecism of a Chippeway courtship will no doubt startle some of our readers. Those who know this people only through the medium of books, will object, that the Indians are callous to the passion and the sentiment of love, and that their marriages

are contracted by the parents, without any volition on the part of those who are chiefly interested. Such is the general fact, but the exceptions are sufficiently numerous, not only, according to the paradox of the grammarians, to prove the rule, but to vindicate the truth of our narrative. The laws of nature cannot be abrogated. Their action may be modified by national policy or superstition, by educational bias, or by the necessity that knows no law. But the passion implanted in the human bosom for beneficent purposes, remains immutable there; although, like a seed buried deeply in the earth, it may not germinate. It is surrounded by circumstances unfriendly to its development. A cold and unnatural fabric of society, forbids its expansion. It is still a constituent element of the soul, indestructible and co-existent with it; and like the imprisoned fountain, it will testify its existence by bursting out, or like the germ, when a genial ray penetrates to its cold and dark place of interment, it will expand and shoot into life, and bloom into fragrance and beauty.

The brothers became aware that they were the rivals of each other, and each began to use all his cunning, to conceal as well as to advance his suit, and to throw obstacles in the way of his competitor. Taught from infancy to suppress their feelings, to persevere in the pursuit of any desired object, and to spurn as unmanly every passion and affection that should stand in the way of any purpose of ambition or of honour, the contest soon became one of highly-wrought excitement. Both were high-spirited young men, just commencing the career of life, with exorbitant notions of their own qualifications, and full of that youthful pride which dreads a failure in any attempt, however unimportant. Panting for action and achievement, the love for that dark-eyed maiden, the fairest of her race, afforded the only outlet for their pent-up desires which their isolated condition presented. A fierce passion for victory animated their bosoms; each marked the footsteps of the other, and watched every glance with untiring vigilance, while the fires of jealousy and hatred were studiously concealed.

The usual forms of courtship were avoided by both the brothers, who, in their eagerness to attain their object, sought to reach it by hidden ways. The elder applied secretly to the mother, to

whom he made liberal promises of reward, in the event of his success, while he hinted darkly at evils that might befall all who should cross his path. The younger sought the ear of his mistress, and finding a propitious moment, pressed his suit, and had the satisfaction of learning that the Red Sky of the Morning was not averse to his success.

It was not long before the mother and daughter compared notes, and Notin was apprized by his wife of the whole matter. That sagacious chief, comprehending at once the mischief threatened to the peace of his family by the contest between the young men, determined to avert the present fury of the storm, by temporising with both parties. He sought an interview with each separately, and with an air in which kindness was mingled with reproof, addressed them both alike, somewhat as follows:

"Why have you secretly hovered round my lodge, to steal away my daughter—like the wolf who creeps into a camp when the hunters are absent? Why have you not asked her in marriage in the usual way? Is this the respect with which you treat a chief, who is also your friend? You came to my camp hungry, and I received you as one of my children, but you would treat me as if I was a false Dacota, or a trading white man. Are you so poor, that you have no present to offer—how then can you support a wife? I know you are very poor—your gun is worn out, your powder and lead exhausted—you have no horse to ride, nor even a dog to follow you. Are you not ashamed to approach the daughter of a chief in so wretched a condition? Go, then, to the war path, and take spoils from our enemies, or go and hunt, and sell your skins to the traders. Let me see what you can do, and I will determine whether you are worthy of my daughter."

Such was the position in which the parties stood on their arrival at Fond du Lac, where several days were consumed in procuring the supplies which they required; and they were about to depart, when it was discovered that both the brothers were missing. Under other circumstances, this abrupt departure would not have afforded any cause for remark; for among the Indians the social bond is so slightly drawn as to impose little restraint upon the movements of individuals, who wander off upon any sudden caprice, without thinking it necessary to consult those who

are most nearly interested in their conduct. Their unsettled habits of life, and constant exposure to danger, render them familiar with these hasty separations, while their suspicious and jealous dispositions lead them to concealment. Fully equipped for war or hunting, they had left the camp separately, and, as was supposed, in different directions. The father of the young men made no comment on the occurrence, and the family of Notin had their own reasons for observing silence, so that nothing was said of the disappearance of the rival brothers. The remainder of the party returned to the haunt of the tribe at Thunder Lake, where Notin intended to pass the summer in collecting the scattered members of his tribe.

The wanderers had not been long at home, when others of the tribe, who had passed the winter at different places, and encountered a variety of suffering and adventure, collected around them, to spend a short season in comparative repose, before the commencement of the autumn hunt. The Turtle, the younger of the absent brothers, after an absence of a few weeks, rejoined his friends, rich in plunder, the avails of his own boldness and address. He had proceeded alone to the country of the Dacotas, where he had seized several fine horses, and other spoil, which he now brought in triumph to the village, and the larger portion of which he immediately tendered to the parents of the Red Sky of the Morning, as a marriage present. So tempting an offer was not to be refused; and the maiden, as is usually the case when the wooer is wealthy, yielded her assent to the wishes of her parents, with a filial piety which cannot be too highly commended. The happy lover led his bride to the lodge he had prepared for her reception; and on the following morning set out on a hunting expedition, followed by her who was to be hereafter the companion of his toils and dangers. Whether fear of the vengeance of the elder brother, the Hawk, or simply a taste for that luxury of unsophisticated minds, the enjoyment of each other's society, dictated this journey, we are unable to determine.

Shortly after the departure of the lovers, the Hawk made his appearance. He too had been successful, and the inhabitants of the village were thrown into a state of high excitement by a signal which announced that he bore the bloody trophies of the vic-

tor. He had stolen upon a little camp of the Sioux—had rushed in upon them in the hour of slumber—had slain two men, and then massacred the remainder of the family, whose scalps he exhibited in evidence of this atrocious deed of daring. To the ears of those who have enjoyed the endearments of social life, it may sound strange that the murderer of women and children should be received with welcome. Yet such was the reception of the midnight prowler, who came reeking with the blood of the innocent and helpless. He was welcomed as one who had conferred honour upon his people. Their natural love of vengeance and hatred of their enemies were gratified by the bloody exploit. He was conducted into the village by the whole band, the warriors dancing around him, and singing their war-songs, while the women and children followed the procession uttering shouts of joy and triumph. On reaching the war-pole which stood in the centre of the village, the scalps were suspended upon it, and a solemn dance was performed; after which the successful brave withdrew to one of the lodges, and seated himself on the ground before it in silence. No one saluted him, nor asked him any questions, until food was placed before him, and his hunger was satisfied. He ate with the ravenous appetite of one who had fasted long; for in the prosecution of his tedious journey homeward, he had eluded pursuit by rapid marches, seldom halting except to sleep, nor venturing to deviate far from his path in pursuit of game. When sated with food he raised his head—the braves began to collect, seating themselves quietly around him—the pipe was lighted, and the lazy volumes of smoke began to curl over the heads of the quiet assemblage. The Hawk recognised his friends, and they gradually slid into a conversation which led to a recital of his adventures. It is popularly supposed that curiosity appertains especially to the female sex, and the Indian, above all men, is thought to hold in supreme contempt this feminine propensity; yet strange as it may seem, no tea-party or other collection of the softer sex, ever followed up the tangled thread of a scandalous rumour with more assiduity than was shown by these lordly savages, in drawing out all the details of a massacre so congenial to their tastes.

Having passed several hours pleasantly in such improving

converse, the company dispersed, highly delighted with their comrade, and more than ever convinced that the Chippeway nation, and particularly that portion of it comprised in the band at Thunder Lake, were the bravest people on the face of the earth. As for the Hawk, being well gorged with food, and disburthened of the tale of his prowess, his mind was at ease, and his body comfortable; so that, gathering his blanket about him, and throwing his heroic form on the ground, he slept soundly for the next fifteen hours. This luxurious state of repose would probably have lasted for several days, had not an evil bird whispered bad tidings in his ears.

It is not known with precision how the Hawk first heard of the marriage of his brother with the Red Sky of the Morning. The Indians say it was told him by a bad bird; but this phrase includes all mischief-makers and tale-bearers, as well as the malevolent spirits who assume the shapes of the feathered tribes to work their evil purposes upon men. He made no remark; but the disappointment and rage depicted upon his countenance, indicated the storm of passion that raged within. He stalked moodily about during the remainder of the day; and this hero, who wore in triumph the scalps of two families, and was universally envied and admired as the most expert cut-throat in the band, was to all appearance as unhappy as any common man. So true it is that genius and great actions, while they win applause, do not afford any protection against the ordinary griefs of humanity. To sum all in one word, he was crossed in love. The night was spent in angry and revengeful thought, and before the day dawned he had departed from the village.

Long and gloomy was the pilgrimage of the disappointed lover. His first intention was to separate himself from his tribe, and to abjure for ever all connection with his kindred. The wounded pride that results from disappointment in a darling object, impelled him to avoid the society of those who knew the tale of his discomfiture. The success of a rival galled his vanity; and revenge, the darling passion of the savage, began to coil itself about his heart. Almost unconsciously he sought the trail of the objects of his hourly thought, and having discovered the direction of their journey, found an intense, though undefinable, interest in

tracing their footsteps. Curiosity, perhaps, at first, and then the strange gratification which a diseased spirit finds in that which chafes its wound, impelled him forward; but every day and every hour nourished within him the demon of revenge.

The solitary being who had thus given himself up to the indulgence of a single passion, now devoted all his energies to the task of searching out and studying those signs by which the Indian derives intelligence that would be sealed to any other eye, and that enable him to pursue the track of a retreating foe with astonishing success. The footprints impressed upon the earth—the relics of an extinguished fire—a thousand particulars too minute to attract attention, except from a mind trained to seek and weigh them, all afford him information; and having a clue, however slight, his sagacity, his knowledge of the country, and his familiar acquaintance with the habits of his people, enable him to follow it out with wonderful acuteness. Thus he proceeded on his tedious adventure for several weeks, often losing the track, and again finding it accidentally, or by means of diligent research—sometimes, when at fault, retracing his own footsteps until he regained the track, and sometimes striking at a venture for some distant point ahead, at which he supposed the travellers would touch. At length he discovered newly-made signs, which showed that those he sought were near at hand.

The sun had sunk below the horizon, and the shadows of night were gathering around, when the Hawk made the discovery which suddenly arrested his footsteps. He paused upon the brink of a beautiful river, whose clear waters flowed calmly by; the air was still, and not a sound disturbed the harmony of the quiet scene. On the opposite shore a thin column of smoke rose from a thicket which concealed the fire from which it issued. He sat down and gazed upon it, as the tiger watches the prey that is unconsciously approaching his lair.

As long as the twilight lasted, he watched the object which had thus riveted his attention, absorbed in thought, and lashing himself into fury, by giving full scope to the passions that had long been pent up in his bosom. Wearied, at last, he threw himself on the ground to sleep, when suddenly the hooting of an owl attracted his notice. The note was low, melancholy, and prolong-

ed, such as a traveller in the wilderness often hears in the night —a dismal screeching, so like the wail of human misery, that many listen to it with superstitious dread. It now fell on the ear of one who heard it with intense emotion. The bird of night was the badge of his own family; and the very cry that now broke so mournfully upon the stillness of the night, was used as a secret signal between its members. Often, when lying in ambush, or creeping stealthily upon a foe, had that wailing note conveyed intelligence to his ear, and he heard it now with a thrill which caused his whole frame to tremble. His sensations partook of joy, uncertainty, and terror. He doubted whether the sound he heard was the voice of the natural bird, which it resembled so nearly, that even his practised ear could detect no difference—whether it was the croaking of a spirit to warn him of danger, or allure him to destruction, or whether it was the night signal of a living member of his own family. Again and again it was repeated, and then a response faintly heard from a distance, across the water, ended his conjectures by the conviction that the voices he heard were those of the objects of his intense hatred!

Creeping upon his hands and knees to the water's edge, the Hawk listened: the splashing of a paddle was heard, and then a birch canoe came gliding swiftly and silently over the still surface of the river. It was guided by a single person, who plied the paddle with expertness, but with the caution of extreme vigilance, dipping it so gently as to create the least possible noise, yet urging the skiff rapidly on its way. As it touched the beach, the Hawk, losing all self-command, rushed forward, and stepped into the little bark, shoving it at the same moment into the stream. The woman who guided it resumed her labour; but in the next instant a loud exclamation from the shore discovered to her that a stranger had taken the place of him she sought; and a third party, plunging in the water, soon reached the canoe, and grappled it with a lusty hand. A fierce struggle ensued, and the slight vessel being overturned, the combatants, locked in each other's grim embrace, were cast into the water. The battle there, though desperate, was brief. For a few minutes there was a fearful struggle—then a deep groan from the Hawk, and a loud, triumphant yell from his adversary announced the result.

The next morning's sun revealed a mournful spectacle. On the shore lay the stiff and bloody corpse of that vindictive man whose sad journey we have pursued to its tragic close. Beside him sat the brother, the rival and foeman, whose hand had dealt the fatal blow, and the beautiful woman, whose attractions had kindled the feud which led to this fatal catastrophe. They shed no tear, for it was not their nature to weep. They wailed not, for the fallen was not a beloved object. But they gazed in terror upon the dead man, and trembled at the dreadful thought that a brother had shed a brother's blood.

Years have rolled away since that event. The Turtle returned to his tribe, and lived long to enjoy the love of the Red Sky of the Morning. A curse remained upon the place of the battle, which became haunted by spirits, and was ever after avoided by men. The Indians, in passing it, steer their canoes silently along the opposite shore, and shudder as they point out to the stranger the spot which, in their expressive language, they have named The Place of the Fratricide.*

* See Appendix, No. XV.

THE CAPUCHIN.

[There is a tradition preserved among the French of a celebrated missionary of their nation, who was one of the earliest of the explorers of the Mississippi and its tributaries, and who died at some spot which is now unknown. We have endeavoured to preserve some of the circumstances, which are related as having attended his death, in the following lines.]

THERE is a wild and lonely dell,
  Far in the wooded west,
Where never summer's sunbeam fell
  To break its long lone rest;

Where never blast of winter swept,
  To ruffle, or to chill,
The calm pellucid lake, that slept
  O'erhung with rock and hill.

A woodland scene by hills enclosed,
  By rocky barriers curbed,
Where shade and silence have reposed
  For ages undisturbed,

Unless when some dark Indian maid,
  Or prophet old and grey,
Have hied them to the solemn shade
  To weep alone, or pray.

For holy rite and gentle love
  Are still so near akin,
They ever choose the sweetest grove
  To pay their homage in.

One morn the boatman's bugle note
  Was heard within the dell,
And o'er the blue wave seemed to float
  Like some unearthly swell.

The boatman's song, the plash of oar,
  The gush of parting wave,
Are faintly heard along the shore,
  And echoed from each cave.

A skiff appears, by rowers stout
  Urged swiftly o'er the tide;
An aged man sat wrapt in thought,
  Who seemed the helm to guide.

He was a holy capuchin,
  Thin locks were on his brow;
His eye, that bright and bold had been,
  With age was darkened now.

From distant lands, beyond the sea,
  The hoary pilgrim came
To combat base idolatry,
  And spread the Holy Name.

From tribe to tribe the good man went,
  The sacred cross he bore;
And savage men, on slaughter bent,
  Would listen and adore.

But worn with age, his mission done,
  Earth had for him no tie,
He had no further wish, save one—
  To hie him home and die.

——"Good father, let us not delay
  Within this gloomy dell;
'Tis here that savage legends say
  Their sinless spirits dwell.

"In every cool sequestered cave
Of this romantic shore,
The spirits of the fair and brave
Unite, to part no more.

"Invisible, the light canoe
They paddle o'er the lake,
Or track the deer in the morning dew,
Among the tangled brake.

"'Tis said their forms, by moonlight seen,
Float gently on the air;
But mortal eye has seldom been
The fearful sight could bear.

"Then, holy father, venture not
To linger in the dell;
It is a pure and blessed spot,
Where only spirits dwell.

"The hallowed foot of prophet seer,
Or pure and spotless maid,
May only dare to wander here
When night has spread her shade!"

——"Dispel, my son, thy groundless fear,
And let thy heart be bold;
For see, upon my breast I bear
The consecrated gold.

"The blessed cross! that long hath been
Companion of my path—
Preserved me in the tempest's din,
Or stayed the heathen's wrath—

"Shall guard us still from threatened harm,
What form soe'er it take:
The hurricane, the savage arm,
Or spirit of the lake."

——" But, father, shall we never cease
Through savage wilds to roam ?
My heart is yearning for the peace
That smiles for us at home.

" We've traced the river of the west,
From sea to fountain head,
And sailed o'er broad Superior's breast,
By wild adventure led.

" We've slept beneath the cypress' shade,
Where noisome reptiles lay ;
We've chased the panther to his bed,
And heard the grim wolf bay.

" And now for sunny France we sigh,
For quiet, and for home ;
Then bid us pass the valley by
Where only spirits roam."

—" Repine not, son ! old age is slow,
And feeble feet are mine;
This moment to my home I go,
And thou shalt go to thine.

" But ere I quit this vale of death,
For realms more bright and fair,
On yon green shore my feeble breath
Shall rise to Heaven in prayer.

" Then high on yonder headland's brow
The holy altar raise ;
Uprear the cross and let us bow,
With humble heart, in praise."

Thus said, the cross was soon uprear'd
On that lone heathen shore,
Where never Christian voice was heard
In prayer to God before.

The old man knelt—his head was bare,
His arms crossed on his breast;
He prayed, but none could hear the prayer
His withered lips expressed.

He ceased—they raised the holy man,
Then gazed in silent dread;
Chill through each vein the life-blood ran—
The pilgrim's soul was fled!

In silence prayed each voyager,
Their beads they counted o'er,
Then made a hasty sepulchre
Upon that fatal shore.

Beside the altar where he knelt,
And where the Lord released
His spirit from its pilgrimage,
They laid the holy priest.

In fear, in haste, a brief adieu
The wondering boatmen take,
Then rapidly their course pursue
Across the haunted lake.

In after years, when bolder men
The vale of spirits sought,
O'er many a wild and wooded glen
They roamed, but found it not.

We only know that such a priest
There was, and thus he fell;
But where his saintly relics rest,
No living man can tell.

The red man, when he tells the tale,
Speaks of the wrath that fell
On him that dared an altar raise,
In the Indian's spirit-dell.

THE DARK MAID OF ILLINOIS.

THE French, who first explored the wild shores and prolific plains that margin the Mississippi river, and extend along its tributary streams, believed that they had found a terrestrial paradise. Never before was such a desert of flowers presented to the astonished eye of man—never before was there exhibited an expanse so wide, so fertile, so splendidly adorned. If the beauty of this region delighted them, its immensity filled them with astonishment, and awakened the most extravagant expectations. Their warm and sprightly imaginations were easily excited to lively admiration, by scenes so grand, so lovely, and so wild, as those presented in this boundless wilderness of woods and flowers. The great length of the magnificent rivers filled them with amazement; while the reputed wealth, and fancied productions of the country, awakened both avarice and curiosity.

We can scarcely realize the sensations with which they must have wandered over a country so different from any they had ever seen, and have contemplated a landscape so unexpectedly majestic and attractive. The freshness and verdure of new lands, unspoiled and unimpoverished by the hand of cultivation, is in itself delightful. It is pleasing to see the works of nature in their original character, as they came from the creative hand; and that pleasure was here greatly enhanced by the infinite variety, and magnificent extent, of the romantic scenery. The plains seemed as boundless as they were beautiful, and the splendid groves, which diversified the surface of these exquisitely graceful lawns, invested them with a peculiar air of rural elegance.

Delighted with this extensive and fertile region, they roamed far and wide over its boundless prairies, and pushed their little barks into every navigable stream. Their inoffensive manners

procured them a favourable reception; their cheerfulness and suavity conciliated even the savage warrior, whose suspicious nature discovered no cause of alarm in the visits of these gay strangers. Divided into small parties, having different objects in view, they pursued their several designs without collision and with little concert. One sought fame, another searched for mines of gold as opulent as those which had enriched the Spaniards in a more southern part of the same continent. One aspired simply to the honour of discovering new lands, another came to collect rare and nondescript specimens of natural curiosities; one travelled to see man in a state of nature, another brought the Gospel to the heathen; while, perhaps, a great number roved carelessly among these interesting scenes, indulging an idle curiosity or a mere love of adventure, and seeking no higher gratification than that which the novelty and excitement of the present moment afforded.

Whatever might be their respective views, they were certainly, in one respect, the most successful of adventurers. They traversed these wide plains with impunity. They penetrated far into the interior of the trackless wilderness. Their canoes were seen tracing the meanders of the longest rivers; and these fearless explorers had already found their way into the heart of this immense continent, while other Europeans obtained, with difficulty, a footing upon the sea coast.

Among the earliest who thus came was Pierre Blondo, who, having served a regular apprenticeship to an eminent barber at Paris, had recently commenced the world on his own account, in the character of valet to an excellent Dominican priest, who was about to visit America. The proverb, "like master like man," had little application to this pair—for never were two human beings more unlike than they. The worthy Dominican was a gentlemanly and priest-like personage, and Pierre a very unassuming plebeian. The master was learned and benevolent,—grave, austere, and self-denying; the valet was a jolly, rattling madcap, who, as he never hesitated to grant a favour or a civility to any human being who asked or needed it, thought it right to be equally obliging to himself; and neither mortified his own flesh nor his neighbour's feelings. The priest mourned over the

depravity of the human race, and especially deprecated the frivolous habits of his countrymen; the valet not only believed this to be the best of all possible worlds, but prided himself particularly in being a native of a country which produces the best fiddlers, cooks, and barbers, on the habitable globe. In short, the master was a priest and the man a hair-dresser; they both loved and endeavoured to improve their species; but the one dealt with the inner, the other with the outer man;—one sought to enlighten the dark abyss of the ignorant heart, while the other sedulously scraped the superfluities of the visage. Father Francis was a mysterious, silent, ascetic man; Pierre was as mercurial and as merry a lad as ever flourished a pair of scissors.

However they might differ in other respects, there was one particular in which Father Francis and his man, Pierre, exactly agreed; namely, in an ardent desire to explore the streams, the forests, and the prairies of Louisiana. They were allured, it is true, by very different motives. The priest came to spread the Gospel among the heathen, to arrest their vices, and to explode their human sacrifices; the valet travelled to see the lion with one horn, the fountain of rejuvenescence, the white-breasted swans, and the dark-skinned girls of Illinois. Pierre's researches into American history had been considerable, and his opportunities for acquiring a knowledge of the new world singularly felicitous. He had shaved gentlemen who had been there—had scraped the very cheeks which were embrowned by the sun of the western Indies, and had held, with secret delight, betwixt his thumb and finger, the identical nostrils that had inhaled the delicious odours of Florida, the land of flowers. He had listened with admiration to their wonderful stories, some of which almost staggered his credulity. He did not doubt the existence of gold mines, in which the pure metal was found in solid masses—the only objection to which was, that they were too large for transportation,—nor of that wonderful pool, in which, if an old man bathed, he lost the decrepitude of age, and regained the bloom of childhood. These things seemed proper enough, and were vouched for by gentlemen who could not be mistaken; yet it seemed to him marvellous, that the birds should be snowy white, and the ladies black; that the men should be beardless, and the

lions have horns; and that gold-dust, grapes, and oranges, should grow and glitter in a wilderness, where there were none but wolves and wild men to gather them.

It is proper to state here, in order to prevent any misunderstanding in a matter of so much importance, that, although Pierre was a barber, he was by no means an insignificant person. He was of honest parentage—the son of a very reputable peasant, who lived decently, and brought up his offspring in habits of industry. He had a fine figure and a very prepossessing countenance. His eye was good, his teeth white, and his smile agreeable. He was, in short, a gentleman—on a small scale, and a most excellent person—in his way. A pleasant young man, with a light purse, and liberal feelings.

During the passage, Pierre became a favourite with his fellow voyagers. He played the flute, sang merry songs, shaved the sailors gratis, and on Sundays brushed up the captain as fine as a grenadier. He felt so happy himself, that he could not be easy without trying to make every body happy around him. At odd times, when he was unemployed, he amused himself in fancying the adventures that awaited him, the fine sights he should see, and the heaps upon heaps of gold and jewels that he should pick up in the new world. He thought himself a second Columbus, and had no doubt that high honours would be conferred upon him on his return—the king would make him a count or a marquis; and M. Corneille, who was then in the meridian of his fame, would write a play, and tell his exploits in poetry. The prime minister would probably offer him his daughter in marriage—and a cloud passed over the brow of the merry Frenchman as he reflected that it would be proper to make the lady miserable, by refusing the honour of the alliance. "I shall certainly be very much obliged to him," said Pierre, as he sat musing on the forecastle, gazing at a long stream of moonlight that sparkled on the undulating waves; "very much obliged: and I shall never be wanting in gratitude to a nobleman who shall do me so much honour,—but I must decline it; for there is pretty little Annette, that I have promised to marry, and who shall never have reason to weep for my inconstancy. Annette is a very pretty girl, and she loves me dearly. I really think she would break her heart if I should

not marry her. Poor girl! she thinks there is no body in the world equal to Pierre—and I have no reason to dispute her judgment. She is neither rich nor noble, but what of that? When I am master of a gold mine, and a marquis of France, I can elevate her to my own rank; and I will hang strings of pearl, and ornaments of solid gold, about her pretty neck, and her slender waist, in such profusion, that the meanness of her birth will be forgotten in the glitter of her attire." Thus did Pierre enjoy the luxury of hope, and revel in anticipation upon the bright prospects that beamed upon his delighted fancy. The vessel flew rapidly over the waves; and, after a prosperous voyage, the new world spread its illimitable shores, its gigantic mountains, and its wooded vales, before the enraptured eyes of the weary voyagers.

Pierre was in the new world. It was very much unlike the old one. Yet its great superiority did not strike him so forcibly as he had expected. The St. Lawrence was a noble river; its shores were green, and the trees were larger than any he had seen in France; but the sunny clime, and the rich vineyards of his native land were not there, nor was there the least sign of a gold mine, or a pearl fishery. Our adventurer, however, was of a sanguine temperament, and determined to suspend his judgment, and hope on for a season.

Shortly after their arrival at Montreal, an expedition was concerted to the newly discovered region of the Upper Mississippi, and Father Francis made his arrangements to accompany the party. Pierre, who, in the long voyage across the Atlantic, comparatively agreeable as it was, had become wearied of the confinement and privations incident to this mode of travelling, looked at the little boats launched on the St. Lawrence, for the transportation of the party, with some distrust, and evinced a considerable deal of reluctance against embarking in a new adventure. In Montreal he had found some of the luxuries which he enjoyed at home, and had been deprived of on shipboard. There were barbers and cooks, to shave and feed people; and, new as the city was, there was a monastery and a ball room, in the first of which, he could be seated in a snug confessional, when he went to confess his sins to the priest, and in the other he could dance without

knocking his head against a spar, or running the risk of jumping overboard. Other considerations, however, weighed against his indolence and love of pleasure. He longed to discover the fountain of rejuvenescence, to bathe in its renovating waters, and secure the miraculous gift of perpetual youth. He panted for the dignity and advantage of being sole proprietor of a gold mine, and returning to merry France with a ship load of treasure,—for the honour of nobility, the pleasure of refusing the prime minister's daughter, and the pride of making Annette a peeress. Incited by hopes so brilliant, and so remarkably reasonable, the spirit of adventure was re-animated in his bosom, and he embarked with newly invigorated alacrity.

They ascended, with much toil, the rapid current of the noble St. Lawrence, meandering among its thousand isles, and gazing with delight on its rocky and luxuriant shores. They coasted the grand and beautiful lakes of the north, enraptured with the freshness and variety of the scenery ; and surveyed with amazement, the great cataract, which has been the wonder of succeeding generations. Every night they encamped upon the banks, and the forest rang with the cheerful sounds of merriment. Sometimes they met the Indians, who gazed upon them as superior beings, and either fled in terror, or endeavoured to conciliate them by kindness and hospitality. It was thus that the Europeans were usually received by the natives of this continent, before little jealousies, and occasional aggressions, were fomented, by hasty retaliation, into lasting hatred. Happy would it have been for our country, and for human nature, had the civilized adventurers to the new world conducted themselves in such a manner as to have deepened, and indelibly engraved upon the savage mind, the feelings of profound respect which their first appearance excited.

When they reached the southern end of Lake Michigan, the waters were high, and they floated over the inundated lands, pushing their boats among the trees of the forest, and over the rank herbage of the low prairies of that region, until they found the current, which had set towards the north, began to flow off in the opposite direction, and floated them into a small stream, running towards the south. Here they halted for some days to hunt,

and repair their boats; and when they reached the Illinois, a large, but placid river, one of the noblest tributaries of the Mississippi, the flood had subsided, and the waters were flowing quietly within their natural channel, through the silent forest.

With what emotions of wonder must those adventurous travellers have gazed upon these wild scenes! How singular must have been their sensations, when they reflected on their distance from the civilized world, and thought of the immensity of that immeasurable waste that was spread around them. They had never imagined, far less witnessed, a desert so blooming or so extensive. There was a magnificence of beauty in its prolific vegetation and gorgeous verdure, and a grandeur in the idea of the boundless extent of this splendid wildernesss, that must have excited the imagination to speculations of intense interest.

Pierre seemed to awaken to a new existence when the boats entered upon this beautiful river; and he felt a thrill of pleasure as he surveyed the placid stream and its lovely shores. The river, deep, unobstructed, and clear as crystal, flows with a current so gentle as to be almost imperceptible, while the overhanging trees protect it from the winds, keeping it as still and inviolate as the fountain that sleeps in its native cave. The stately swan sailed upon the mirror that reflected her downy plumage, and the gaudy paroquet, rich in green and golden hues, sported among the tall trees. The tangled grape vines hung in heavy masses from the boughs, and the wild fruit trees dipped their limbs in the water. Here and there the tall bluffs jutted in upon the river, impressing their gracefully curved outlines upon the clear blue ground of the sky, and throwing their long dark shadows upon the water; but most usually, a rich border of noble forest trees, springing from a low shore, hung in graceful beauty over the stream. Sometimes they saw herds of buffalo, wading in the tide, sometimes the lazy bear wallowing in the mire, and, occasionally, the slender deer, standing in the timid attitude of attention; while every secluded inlet, or shaded cove, was filled with screaming wild fowl, of an infinite variety of plumage.

The travellers arrived, at length, at an Indian village, where they were entertained with great hospitality. The chief, surrounded bv his wise men, and his warriors, painted in gay colours,

and decked with feathers, symbolical of peace, received them with public demonstrations of respect; and a great company, of different ages, and both sexes, was assemhled to gaze at them, and to do them honour. The hump of the buffalo, the head of the elk, and the marrowy tail of the beaver, were dressed for them, with all the skill of aboriginal gourmandism; they were feasted, besides, upon bear's oil, jerked venison, hominy, and delicately roasted puppies; and the juicy steams of these delicious viands, unvitiated by the villanous artificial mixtures of European cookery, were pleasantly blended with the balmy odours of the forest. Father Francis, among other monastic attainments, had acquired a very competent knowledge of the art of good eating, and did ample justice to the generous fare which spread the board of his savage entertainers; but being a reformer of morals, he determined to show his gratitude by delivering before his new friends a homily against intemperance; resolving, at the same time, to improve so favourable an opportunity of suggesting the propriety of seasoning such gross meats with a few wholesome condiments; for, to his taste, the devouring of flesh without salt, pepper, or sauce, was mere cannibalism. Pierre was a reformer, too, and he made up his mind to improve the gastronomic science of his country, whenever he should become a marquis, by adding the buffalo's tongue and hump, and the elk's head, to the luxuries of a Parisian bill of fare. The cooking of puppies he thought an unchristian and dangerous innovation, which might lead to the destruction of some of the most harmless animals in creation, while the addition which it brought to the list of solid edibles, was not worthy of much commendation.

Having feasted the adventurers, the Indians presented them with feathers, belts, moccasins, and dressed skins; and the chief, in the profusion of his generosity, offered to Father Francis fifteen beautiful young girls, but the good man, as any prudent man would have done, wisely declined the acceptance of a present that might prove so troublesome. Pierre thought he would have ordered things differently: he winked, shrugged, hinted, and at last ventured to beg that he might take one of them, at least, to Paris with him, as a curiosity; but the inexorable priest advised him to carry a swan, a paroquet, a pet buffalo, or a rat-

tlesnake, in preference. Finally, when that worthy and highly honoured ecclesiastic had been feasted to repletion, and loaded to weariness with deferential civilities, a soft couch of buffalo robes was spread for him, and a number of young girls stood round him, as he reposed, fanning him with the snowy wings of the swan, and driving away the musquitoes with bunches of gaudy feathers. Pierre thought this a very grand ceremony, and quite comfortable withal; and determined, that, whenever he should become proprietor of a gold mine, he would enjoy the luxury of slumber with similar attendance.

It would be a question worthy the attention of the curious in matters relating to the philosophy of the human mind, whether that love of foreigners which has ever distinguished the American people, and made them the sport of every idle traveller who has chanced to linger on our shores, was not derived from the aborigines. The vanity of showing off a travelled "lion" at our parties is certainly not original. If it be not an inherent passion in the human breast, it has, at least, prevailed throughout many ages. The desire to behold the exotic production of a distant clime—to entertain one who has roamed through latitudes different from our own, and had hair breadth 'scapes, has long been a distinguishing trait in the domestic manners of our countrymen; and we are happy to be able to trace the propensity back to a period anterior to our existence as a nation. For we do not set it down among our virtues. Hospitality may have much to do with keeping it alive, and a generous love of knowledge may afford it some nourishment. But we fear that, after all, it rests upon a solid substratum of vanity, and is cherished by the oozings of an inquisitive curiosity. The Illini, however, fared much better in the result of their attentions to distinguished strangers, than we who have succeeded and imitated them. They received the French, with confiding kindness, into the bosom of their society, and fed them upon the fat of their land; and the worthy visiters of that primitive people recorded their hospitality in terms of grateful acknowledgment. We have pursued a similar course of conduct towards other Europeans, and have been sadly traduced and ridiculed for our pains.

Father Francis took an early occasion to say a word in season

to the savages on the great business of his mission. They heard him with grave respect, and promised to take the matter into consideration; but, as their intercourse was conducted entirely by signs, it is not likely that they were greatly edified. He showed them a telescope, a mariner's compass, and a watch, and endeavoured to explain their several properties; they listened with attention, offered food to the watch, which they supposed to be a living animal, looked with fear at the telescope, and picked the old man's pocket, while he was lecturing upon natural philosophy. Upon the whole, the savages showed great capabilities for the pursuits of civilized life. Pierre, in the meanwhile, remained an inactive spectator of these proceedings. The Indians, with their usual tact, discovered that he occupied a subordinate place in the mission, which released them from the necessity of paying public honours. But his fine figure, his elastic step, and his open countenance, won their regard, and obtained for him the most cordial attention. Though he was not, as they supposed, a chief, or a prophet, they imagined that he was a young brave of promise, and perhaps of distinction, in his tribe.

The next morning, the young warriors dispersed themselves in the neighbouring groves, to paint their bodies and decorate their heads. This is one of the most important employments of an Indian's life. No beau, nor dandy, nor exquisite, in any part of the world, expends more time in the laborious duties of the toilet, than is consumed by the savage in decorating his person. Pierre went among them, bowing and smiling, in his usual obliging manner, with his razors, combs, scissors, and pomatums; and, after exhibiting specimens of his skill upon himself, prevailed upon some of his new acquaintances to place themselves under his hands. He was not only a complete adept in his own art, but a man of genius, who could adapt its principles to the circumstances of a new case; and, directed by the slight observations he had been enabled to make, painted up some of the savages, after their own fashion, with peculiar elegance, and to their entire satisfaction. They were delighted with his clever and obliging talents. He exhibited his lancet and tooth-drawers, and explained their use by significant gestures; and the Indians, supposing them to be delicate instruments for torturing prisoners of war, patted him on the

head as a valuable auxiliary. He produced a pair of foils, and, while he convinced them that he was a great warrior, caused an infinite deal of merriment by the contrast of his own dexterity with the awkwardness of those who were prevailed upon to oppose him. A pocket mirror, and some trinkets, which he displayed, won their admiration, and they soon determined, that, although Father Francis might be highest in rank, Pierre was by far the greatest man, and most valuable acquaintance. Such are the triumphs of genius! Pierre had ventured upon a delicate experiment, in which ninety-nine of the most consummately skilled artists might have failed, where one would have been successful.

> "There is a tide in the affairs of men,
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;"

he had touched a fortunate spring, and found the talisman which commanded a brilliant destiny. In the fulness of his heart he opened a small package of looking-glasses, which he had brought for traffic, and distributed them gratuitously among the warriors, presenting the largest and most elegant to the chief, who was so much delighted, that he instantly, with princely liberality, offered him his daughter in marriage. Happy Pierre! he was that day the proudest of men, and the most blissful of barbers.

Pierre had serious scruples whether he should accept this generous offer; not that he considered it above his merits—on the contrary, he gave the chief great credit for having had the acuteness to discover his genius, and the magnanimity to know how to appreciate it. It was a proposal worthy of both the parties concerned. But it touched his honour, while it flattered his pride. He had not forgotten his obligations to Annette—the merry dark-eyed girl who had given him the first offering of her young affections. Poor little Annette, what would she think of it, if he should marry another lady. He was sure she would never stand it. The blight of disappointment would fall upon the warm heart that throbbed so sincerely for him. "No," said he to himself, "I will be true to Annette, be the consequences what they may; I have promised her my hand, and a share in my gold mine; and nothing shall ever induce me to act in a manner unbecoming a French gentleman." Having formed this heroic resolution, he put his hat

on one side of his head, and strutted through the village, with the independent air of a man who chooses to do as he pleases, and the self-satisfied countenance of one who has adopted a virtuous determination.

But Pierre knew little of the frailty of his own heart. Few of us are aware of the backslidings of which we may be guilty when there is a lady in the case. He began to reflect, that the partner so liberally tendered to his acceptance, was the daughter of a king, and that such an alliance was not to be picked up every day in the woods of the new world. He might grow gray before another sovereign would condescend to invite him into his family; and, reasoning in his own mind, that the proposed marriage would make him a prince, and heir apparent, he began to entertain strong doubts whether patriotism, and the honour of the French nation, did not require him to sacrifice his affections to the glory and advantage of giving a king to the Illini. Napoleon has since been called upon to decide a similar question; and Pierre, though not a great warrior, loved his country and himself as well as Napoleon. He reflected further, that the possession of the sovereign power would be the readiest way to the discovery of the fountain of rejuvenescence; the gold mines would all be his own, and he could send Annette a shipload of the precious metal. Moreover, he had already discovered, that in the new world it was the custom for great men to have a plurality of wives—a custom that seemed to him to be founded in good sense—and he saw no reason why he should not comply with it, and, with the first cargo of gold he should send to France, despatch an invitation to Annette to share his prosperity and the happiness of his tawny bride.

When our inclinations prompt us strongly to a particular line of conduct, it is easy to find reasons enough to turn the scale. Indeed, it is most usual to adopt a theory first, and then to seek out arguments to support it. Pierre could now find a host of reasons urging him to instant wedlock with the Illinois maiden. And not the least were the advantages which would accrue to Father Francis, to the church, and to the cause of civilization. When he should become a prince, he could take the venerable priest under his patronage, encourage the spread of the true faith, cause his subjects to be civilized, and induce them to dress like

Christians and feed like rational beings. He longed, with all the zeal of a reformer, to see them powder their hair, and abstain from the savage practice of eating roasted puppies.

So he determined to marry the lady; and, having thus definitely settled the question, thought it would be proper to take the advice of his spiritual guide. Father Francis was shocked at the bare mention of the affair. He admonished Pierre of the sin of marrying a heathen, and of the wickedness of breaking his plighted faith; and assured him, in advance, that such misconduct would bring down upon him the severe displeasure of the church. Pierre thanked him with the most humble appearance of conviction, and forthwith proceeded to gratify his own inclination—believing that, in the affair of wedlock, he knew what was for his own good quite as well as a holy monk, who, to the best of his judgment, could know very little about the matter.

On the following morning the marriage took place, with no other ceremony than the delivery of the bride into the hands of her future husband. Pierre was as happy as bridegrooms usually are—for his companion was a slender, pretty girl, with a mild black eye and an agreeable countenance. They were conducted to a wigwam, and installed at once into the offices of husband and wife, and into the possession of their future mansion. The females of the village assembled, and practised a good many jokes at the expense of the young couple: and Pierre, as well to get rid of these as to improve the earliest opportunity of examining into the mineral treasures of the country, endeavoured, by signs, to invite his partner to a stroll—intimating, at the same time, that he would be infinitely obliged to her if she would have the politeness to show him a gold mine or two. The girl signified her acquiescence, and presently stole away through the forest, followed by the enamoured hair-dresser.

As soon as they were out of sight of the village, Pierre offered her his arm, but the arch girl darted away, laughing, and shaking her black tresses, which streamed in the air behind her, as she leaped over the logs and glided through the thickets. Pierre liked her none the less for this evidence of coquetry, but gaily pursued his beautiful bride, for whom he began to feel the highest admiration. Her figure was exquisitely moulded, and the exercise in

which she was now engaged displayed its gracefulness to the greatest advantage. There was a novelty, too, in the adventure, which pleased the gay-hearted Frenchman; and away they ran, mutually amused and mutually satisfied with each other.

Pierre was an active young fellow, and, for a while, followed the beautiful savage with a creditable degree of speed; but, unaccustomed to the obstacles which impeded the way, he soon became fatigued. His companion slackened her pace when she found him lingering behind; and, when the thicket was more than usually intricate, kindly guided him through the most practicable places,—always, however, keeping out of his reach; and whenever he mended his pace, or showed an inclination to overtake her, she would dart away, looking back over her shoulder, laughing, and coquetting, and inviting him to follow. For a time this was amusing enough, and quite to the taste of the merry barber; but the afternoon was hot, the perspiration flowed copiously, and he began to doubt the expediency of having to catch a wife, or win even a gold mine, by the sweat of his brow—especially in a new country. Adventurers to newly discovered regions expect to get things easily; the fruits of labour may be found at home.

On they went in this manner, until Pierre, wearied out, was about to give up the pursuit of his light-heeled bride, when they reached a spot where the ground gradually ascended, until, all at once, they stood upon the edge of an elevated and extensive plain. Our traveller had heretofore obtained partial glimpses of the prairies, but now saw one of these vast plains, for the first time, in its breadth and grandeur. Its surface was gently uneven; and, as he happened to be placed on one of the highest swells, he looked over a boundless expanse, where not a single tree intercepted the prospect or relieved the monotony. He strained his vision forward, but the plain was boundless—marking the curved line of its profile on the far distant horizon. The effect was rendered more striking by the appearance of the setting sun, which had sunk to the level of the farthest edge of the prairie, and seemed like a globe of fire resting upon the ground. Pierre looked around him with admiration. The vast expanse—destitute of trees, covered with tall grass, now dried by the summer's heat, and extending, as it seemed to him, to the western verge of the continent—exci-

ted his special wonder. Little versed in geography, he persuaded himself that he had reached the western boundary of the world, and beheld the very spot where the sun passed over the edge of the great terrestrial plane. There was no mistake. He had achieved an adventure worthy the greatest captain of the age. His form dilated, and his eye kindled, with a consciousness of his own importance. Columbus had discovered a continent, but *he* had travelled to the extreme verge of the earth's surface, beyond which nothing remained to be discovered. "Yes," he solemnly exclaimed, "there is the end of the world! How fortunate am I to have approached it by daylight, and with a guide; otherwise, I might have stepped over in the dark, and have fallen—I know not where!"

The Indian girl had seated herself on the grass, and was composedly waiting his pleasure, when he discovered large masses of smoke rolling upward in the west. He pointed towards this new phenomenon, and endeavoured to obtain some explanation of its meaning; but the bride, if she understood his enquiry, had no means of reply. There is a language of looks which is sufficient for the purposes of love. The glance of approving affection beams expressively from the eye, and finds its way in silent eloquence to the heart. No doubt that the pair, whose bridal day we have described, had already learned, from each other's looks, the confession which they had no other common language to convey; but the intercourse of signs can go no further. It is perfectly inadequate to the interpretation of natural phenomena: and the Indian maid was unable to explain that singular appearance which so puzzled her lover. But discovering, from the direction to which he pointed, that his curiosity was strongly excited, the obliging girl rose, and led the way towards the west. They walked for more than an hour. Pierre insensibly became grave and silent, and his sympathizing companion unconsciously fell into the same mood. He had taken her hand, which she now yielded without reluctance, and they moved slowly, side by side, over the plain—she with a submissive and demure air, and he alternately admiring his beautiful bride, and throwing suspicious glances at the novel scene around him. The sun had gone down, the breeze had subsided, and the stillness of death was hanging over the prairie.

Pierre began to have awful sensations. Though bold and volatile, a something like fear crept over him, and he would have turned back; but the pride of a French gentleman, and a marquis in anticipation, prevented him. He felt mean—for no man of spirit ever becomes seriously alarmed without feeling a sense of degradation. There is something so unmanly in fear, that, although no bosom is entirely proof against it, we feel ashamed to acknowledge its influence even to ourselves. Our hero looked forward in terror, yet was too proud to turn back. Superstition was beginning to throw its misty visions about his fancy. He had taken a step contrary to the advice of his father confessor, and was in open rebellion against the church; and he began to fear that some evil spirit, under the guise of an Indian maid, was seducing him away to destruction. At all events, he determined not to go much further.

The shades of night had begun to close, when they again ascended one of those elevations which swells so gradually that the traveller scarcely remarks them until he reaches the summit, and beholds, from a commanding eminence, a boundless landscape spread before him. The veil of night, without concealing the scene, rendered it indistinct; the undulations of the surface were no longer perceptible; and the prairie seemed a perfect plain. One phenomenon astonished and perplexed him: before him the prairie was lighted up with a dim but supernatural brilliancy, like that of a distant fire, while behind was the blackness of darkness. An air of solitude reigned over that wild plain, and not a sound relieved the desolation of the scene. A chill crept over him as he gazed around, and not an object met his eye but that dark maid, who stood in mute patience by his side, as waiting his pleasure; but on whose features, as displayed by the uncertain light that glimmered on them, a smile of triumph seemed to play. He looked again, and the horizon gleamed brighter and brighter, until a fiery redness rose above its dark outline, while heavy, slow moving, masses of cloud curled upward above it. It was evidently the intense reflection, and the voluminous smoke, of a vast fire. In another moment the blaze itself appeared, first shooting up at one spot, and then at another, and advancing, until the whole line of horizon was clothed with flames, that rolled around,

and curled, and dashed upward, like the angry waves of a burning ocean. The simple Frenchman had never heard of the fires that sweep over our wide prairies in the autumn, nor did it enter into his head that a natural cause could produce an effect so terrific. The whole western horizon was clad in fire, and, as far as the eye could see, to the right and left, was one vast conflagration, having the appearance of angry billows of a fiery liquid, dashing against each other, and foaming, and throwing flakes of burning spray into the air. There was a roaring sound like that caused by the conflict of waves. A more terrific sight could scarcely be conceived; nor was it singular that an unpractised eye should behold in that scene a wide sea of flame, lashed into fury by some internal commotion.

Pierre could gaze no longer. A sudden horror thrilled his soul. His worse fears were realized in the tremendous landscape. He saw before him the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels. The existence of such a place of punishment he had never doubted; but, heretofore, it had been a mere dogma of faith, while now it appeared before him in its terrible reality. He thought he could plainly distinguish gigantic black forms dancing in the flames, throwing up their long misshapen arms, and writhing their bodies into fantastic shapes. Uttering a piercing shriek, he turned and fled with the swiftness of an arrow. Fear gave new vigour to the muscles which had before been relaxed with fatigue, and his feet, so lately heavy, now touched the ground with the light and springy tread of the antelope. Yet, to himself, his steps seemed to linger, as if his heels were lead.

The Indian girl clapped her hands and laughed aloud as she pursued him. That laugh, which, at an earlier hour of this eventful day, had enlivened his heart by its joyous tones, now filled him with terror. It seemed the yell of a demon—the triumphant scream of hellish delight over the downfall of his soul. The dark maid of Illinois, so lately an object of love, became, to his distempered fancy, a minister of vengeance—a fallen angel sent to tempt him to destruction. A supernatural strength and swiftness gave wings to his flight, as he bounded away with the speed of the ostrich of the desert; but he seemed, to himself, to crawl sluggishly, and, whenever he cast a glance behind, that

mysterious girl of the prairie was laughing at his heels. He tried to invoke the saints, but, alas! in the confusion of his mind, he could not recollect the names of more than half a dozen, nor determine which was the most suitable one to be called upon in such an anomalous case. Arrived at the forest, he dashed headlong through its tangled thickets. Neither the darkness, nor any obstacle, checked his career; but scrambling over fallen timber, tearing through copse and briar, he held his way, bruised and bleeding, through the forest. At last he reached the village, staggered into a lodge which happened to be unoccupied, and sunk down insensible.

The sun was just rising above the eastern horizon when Pierre awoke. The Indian maid was bending over him with looks of tender solicitude. She had nursed him through the silent watches of the night, had pillowed his head upon the soft plumage of the swan, and covered him with robes of the finest fur. She had watched his dreamy sleep through the long hours, when all others were sleeping, and no eye witnessed her assiduous care—had bathed his throbbing temples with water from the spring, and passed her slender fingers through his ringlets, with the fondness of a young and growing affection, until she had soothed the unconscious object of her tenderness into a calm repose. It was her first love, and she had given her heart up to its influence with all the strength, and all the weakness, of female passion. Under other circumstances it might long have remained concealed in her own bosom, and have gradually become disclosed by the attentions of her lover, as the flower opens slowly to the sun. But she had been suddenly called to the discharge of the duties of a wife; and woman, when appealed to by the charities of life, gives full play to her affections, pouring out the treasures of her love in liberal profusion.

But her tenderness was thrown away upon the slumbering bridegroom, whose unusual excitement, both of body and mind, had been succeeded by a profound lethargy. No sooner did he open his eyes, than the dreadful images of the night became again pictured upon his imagination. Even that anxious girl, who had hung over him with sleepless solicitude, throughout the night, and still watched, dejected, by his side, seemed to wear a malignant

aspect, and to triumph in his anguish. He shrunk from the glance of her eye, as if its mild lustre would have withered him. She laid her hand upon his brow, and he writhed as if a serpent had crawled over his visage. The hope of escape suddenly presented itself to his mind. He rose, and rushed wildly to the shore. The boats were just leaving the bank; his companions had been grieved at his marriage, and were alarmed when they found he had left the village; but Father Francis, a rigid moralist, and a stern man, determined not to wait for him a moment, and the little barks were already shoved into the stream, when the haggard barber appeared, and plunged into the water. As he climbed the side of the nearest boat, he conjured his comrades, in tones of agony, to fly. Imagining he had discovered some treachery in their new allies, they obeyed; the oars were plied with vigour, and the vessels of the white strangers rapidly disappeared from the eyes of the astonished Illini, who were as much perplexed by the abrupt departure, as they had been by the unexpected visit of their eccentric guests.

Pierre took to his bed, and remained an invalid during the rest of the voyage. Nor did he set his foot on shore again in the new world. One glance at the lake of fire was enough for him, and he did not, like Orpheus, look back at the infernal regions from which he had escaped. The party descended the Mississippi to the gulf of Mexico, where, finding a ship destined for France, he took leave of his companions, from whom he had carefully concealed the true cause of his alarm. During the passage across the Atlantic he recovered his health, and, in some measure, his spirits; but he never regained his thirst for adventure, his ambition to be a marquis, or his desire to seek for gold. The fountain of rejuvenescence itself had no charms to allure him back to the dangerous wildernesses of the far west. On all these subjects he remained silent as the grave. One would have supposed that he had escaped the dominions of Satan under a pledge of secresy.

A new misfortune awaited him at home, where, to his infinite mortification, he found Annette married to a lank, snivelling pastrycook, dispensing smiles, and pies, and sugar plums, from behind a counter, and enjoying as much happiness as she could have tasted in the rank to which he had once destined her. It

was not kind in her to have jilted Pierre for a pastry cook, when he would not have jilted her for any thing less than a princess. Our hero had stuck to his integrity like a gentleman, until strong temptation overmastered him, while she had listened to the sugared compliments of the confectioner, as soon as the back of her generous lover was turned, and became mistress of a cake shop, while he was laying plans to make her a peeress of France, and a princess of Illinois. Short-sighted Annette! to value so slightly the sincere passion of so munificent a lover! Pierre received the news of her defection with the composure of a philosopher—shrugged his shoulders, snapped his fingers, and resumed his humble occupation. He was not the man to break his heart for a trifle; and, after bearing with fortitude the loss of a gold mine, a throne, and lovely princess, the infidelity of a light-hearted maiden was not a thing to grieve over. He lived a barber, and died a bachelor. When the bloom of youth began to fade from his cheek, and the acuteness of his sensibilities became a little blunted—when he saw his rival, the confectioner, prospering and growing fat, and the prospect of Annette's becoming a widow more and more remote, his reserve wore away, and he began to relate his adventures to his customers. He became quite celebrated—as all Europeans are, who have travelled in America—many flocked to his shop to hear his interesting recitals, and the burning lake was added, by common fame, to the other wonders of the new world.

The Indian maid followed the white stranger to the shore, and saw him depart, with grief. She gazed at the receding boats until they turned an angle of the river, where they vanished for ever from her view, and then she sat down, and buried her face in her hands. Her companions, in sympathy for her feelings, left her alone, and when all eyes were withdrawn, she gave vent to her feelings, and wept bitterly over her shame. She had been betrothed in the face of the whole tribe, and had been publicly deserted by her lover. He had fled from her with every appearance of terror and loathing. She was repudiated under circumstances of notoriety, which deeply wounded her pride; while a tenderness newly awakened, and evinced to the full extent that maiden delicacy permitted, was cruelly repaid by insult. Nor was the

acuteness of these feelings at all blunted by the suspicion that she had been herself an accessory in producing the melancholy result. Pierre had followed her to the prairie in all the joyous hilarity of an ardent lover, he had fled from her in fear, and, although the cause of his terror was unknown, she imputed it to something in her own person or deportment. There is no anguish which a woman feels so keenly as the pang of mortified affection—the conviction that her offered love is spurned—the virgin shame of having betrayed a preference for one who does not requite it—the mortification of attempting and failing to kindle the flame of love. Woman can bear, and thousands have borne, the pain of loving without being beloved, when the secret remains hidden in her own bosom; but when the husband, or the accepted lover, repels, or coldly estimates, the warm and frank avowal of a virtuous passion, he inflicts a wound which no surgery can heal, he touches one of the master springs of the heart, with a rudeness that reaches its vitality and withers it for ever. Woman can bear pain, or misfortune, with a fortitude that man may in vain attempt to emulate; but she has a heart whose sensibilities require a delicate observance;—she submits to power with humility, to oppression with patience, to the ordinary calamities of human nature with resignation—nothing breaks her heart but insulted love.

For whole days did the Indian maid wander through the solitary forest, ashamed to return to the encampment of her tribe. When led back to her father's lodge, she avoided the society of the maiden throng, and fled from the young warriors who would have courted her smiles. She ceased to be numbered among the dark-eyed beauties of her tribe; and but a few moons had passed away since the visit of the white strangers from the land of the rising sun, when a little hillock, on the summit of a lonely mound in the prairie, covered the remains of the beautiful and love stricken MAID OF ILLINOIS.

THE INDIAN HATER.

Some years ago, I had occasion to travel over the beautiful prairies of Illinois, then a frontier state, containing but few inhabitants, and those chiefly of the class called backwoodsmen. In the course of my journey, I stopped one day at a village to rest; and while my horse was eating his corn, and mine hostess was picking the chicken that was to be broiled for my dinner, I stepped into a neighbouring store to purchase some small article of which I stood in need. I found a number of persons there, engaged, some in buying merchandise, some in talking politics, and others in reading the manuscript advertisements of stray horses and constable's sales, that were pasted on the walls. There were a bottle of whiskey and a pitcher of water on the counter, free for all comers, as was the hospitable fashion of those days, before temperance had got to be a tip-top virtue, or Father Mathew the greatest of modern reformers. Being not unwilling to observe a scene which might afford amusement, and to while away a few minutes in conversation, I leaned my back against the counter, and addressed myself to a person having the appearance of a substantial farmer, who answered my inquiries respecting the country with intelligence and civility.

While thus engaged, my attention was drawn to a person who stood near. He was a man who might have been about fifty years of age. His height did not exceed the ordinary stature, and his person was rather slender than otherwise; but there was something in his air and features which distinguished him from common men. The expression of his countenance was keen and daring. His forehead was elevated, his cheek bones high, his lips thin and compressed. Long exposure to the climate had tanned his complexion to a deep brown, and had hardened his

skin and muscles, so as to give him the appearance of a living petrifaction. He seemed to have lived in the open air, exposed to the elements, and to every extreme of temperature.

There was nothing in the dress of this individual to attract attention; he was accosted occasionally by others, and seemed familiar with all who were present. Yet there was an air of abstraction, and standing aloof about him, so different from the noisy mirth and thoughtless deportment of those around him, that I could not help observing him. In his eye there was something peculiar, yet I could not tell in what that peculiarity consisted. It was a small grey orb, whose calm, bold, direct glances, seemed to vouch that it had not cowered with shame, or quailed in danger. There was blended in that eye a searching keenness, with a quiet vigilance—a watchful, sagacious self-possession—so often observable in the physiognomy of those who are in the habit of expecting, meeting, and overcoming peril. His heavy eyebrows had been black, but time had touched them with his pencil. He was dressed in a coarse grey hunting shirt, of homespun cotton, girded round the waist with a broad leathern belt, tightly drawn, in which rested the long knife, with which the western hunter despatches his game, cuts his food, picks his flint and his teeth, and whittles sticks for amusement.

Upon the whole, there was about this man an expression of quiet determination, of grim and gloomy sternness, of intense but smothered passion, which stamped him as something out of the ordinary view of character; yet there were indications of openness and honesty, that forbade distrust. He was rough, but not a ruffian. His was not the unblushing front of hardy guilt, nor the lurking glance of underhanded villany. A stranger would not have hesitated to confide in his faith or courage, but would have been extremely reluctant to provoke his hostility.

I had barely time to make these observations, when several Indians, who had strolled into the village, entered the store. The effect of their presence upon the backwoodsman, whom I have described, was instantaneous and remarkable. His eyes rolled wildly, as if he had been suddenly stung to madness, gleaming with a strange fierceness—an intense lustre, like that which flashes from the eyeballs of the panther, when crouched

in a dark covert, ready to dart upon his prey. His sallow cheek was flushed; the muscles, that but a moment before seemed so rigid, became flexible, and twitched convulsively. His hand sliding quietly to the hilt of his large knife, as if by an involutary impulse, grasped it firmly; and it was easy to perceive that a smothered fire had been disturbed, and that a single breath would be sufficient to light up a blaze. But, except these indications, he remained motionless as a statue, gazing with a look of intense ferocity at the intruders. The Indians halted when their eyes met his, and exchanged glances of intelligence with each other. Whether it was from instinct, or that they knew the man, or whether the natural sagacity of their race enabled them to read the signs of danger in his scowling visage, they seemed willing to avoid him, and retired. The backwoodsman made a motion, as if to follow; but several of the company, who had watched this silent, though momentary scene, with interest, gently withheld him, and after conversing with him a few moments in an earnest, but under tone, led him off in one direction, while the Indians rode away in another.

Having understood from the farmer, with whom I had been talking, that he was about to return home, and that my route led through his neighbourhood, I accepted the offer of his company and guidance, and we set out together. It was a pleasant afternoon in the fall, and as our horses trotted quietly over the smooth prairie road, the discourse naturally fell upon the scene we had just witnessed, and I expressed a curiosity to learn something of the history and character of the man, whose image had impressed itself so forcibly on my mind. I was young and romantic then, and singular as this being certainly was, his peculiarities were probably magnified to my excited fancy.

"He is a strange, mysterious-looking being," said I, "and I should think he must be better, or worse, than other men."

"Samuel Monson is a very good neighbour," replied the farmer, cautiously.

"You say that in a tone," rejoined I, "which seems to imply, that in some other respects he may not be so good."

"Well—as to that, I cannot say, of my own knowledge, that I know any harm of the man."

"And what do other people say of him?"

The farmer hesitated, and then, with a caution very common among people of this description, replied:

"People often say more than they can prove. It's not good, no how, to be talking of one's neighbours; and Monson, as I said before, is a good neighbour."

"But a bad man, as I understand."

"No—far from it—the man's well enough—"

My companion hesitated here, as gossips of both sexes are apt to do, when conscious of a strong inclination to tell all they know on a delicate subject; but my laudable thirst for useful knowledge had, I suppose, awakened a benevolent desire to gratify it, and the worthy man added, in a low tone, and looking cautiously around:

"——Except——The folks do say he are rather too keen with his rifle."

"How so? does he shoot his neighbour's cattle?"

"No, sir—Samuel Monson is as much above a mean action as any other man."

"What then, is he quarrelsome?"

"Oh, bless you, no! There's not a peaceabler man in the settlement; but he used to be a great Indian fighter in the last war, and he got sort o' haunted to the woods; and folks do say that he's still rather too keen on the track of a moccasin."

"I do not exactly understand you, my dear sir.—The Indians are now quiet, I believe, and at peace with us?"

"Why yes, they are very peaceable. They never come near us, except now and then a little party comes in to trade. There's not many of them in these parts, and they live a good piece off."

"They are civil and harmless, are they not?"

"Yes, sir, quite agreeable—bating the killing of a hog once in a while—but that we don't vally—it is but just nateral to the poor savage to shoot anything that runs in the woods. They have a honing in that way, and you can't stop them, no way you can fix it."

"In what way, then, does this Monson interfere with them?"

"I did not say, stranger, that Monson done it. No, no; I would'n't hurt no man's character; but the fact and the truth

are about this: now and then an Indian are missing; and now and then one are found dead in the range;—and folks will have their notions, and their talk, and their suspicions about it—and some talk hard of Monson."

"But why charge it upon him?"

"Well, if you must have it out, stranger,—in this country we all know the bore of every man's rifle. Monson's gun carries just fifty to the pound. Now the bullet holes in all these Indians that have been shot are the same, and we know whose rifle they suit. Besides this, horse tracks have been seen on the trail of the moccasin. They were very particular tracks, and just suited the hoof of a certain horse. Then a certain man was known to be lying out in the range, about that same time; and when all these things are put together, it don't take a Philadelphia lawyer to tell who done the deed. No mistake in Sam Monson. He likes a skrimmage with them. He goes off sometimes, and is gone for weeks, and people reckon that he goes to their own hunting grounds to lie in wait for them. They do say, he can scent a red-skin like a hound, and never lets a chance slip—no how."

"But is it possible, that in a civilized country, within the reach of our laws, a wretch is permitted to hunt down his fellow-creatures like wild beasts; to murder a defenceless Indian, who comes into our territory in good faith, believing us to be what we profess, as a Christian people!"

"Well, stranger,—as to the matter of that—it is not exactly permitted; we don't know for certain who does it, and it's not any particular man's business to inquire into it, more than another. There's no love for the Indians among us, no how. Many of the people have had their kin murdered by the savages in early times; and all who have been raised in the back woods, have been learned to dislike them, and fear them. Then Monson is an honest fellow, works hard, pays his debts, and is always willing to do a good turn, and it would seem hard to break neighbourhood with him for the matter of a few Indians. People don't think the Indians of much account, no how!"

"But the wickedness of such unprovoked murder—the shame—the breach of law, the violation of hospitality!"

"Well, so it is. It are a sin; and sorry would I be to have it on my conscience. But, then, some think an Indian or so will never be missed; others, again, hate to create an interruption in the settlement; others, who pretend to know the law, say that the general government has the care of the business of the Indians, and that our state laws won't kiver the case—so they allow it's none of our business. Some folks, you know, go in heavy for state rights, and don't believe in meddling with any thing that belongs to Uncle Sam; and withal Monson keeps his own counsel, and so among hands he goes his own road, and no questions asked."

All this seemed very strange to me. Border wars, we all know, are productive of feuds, which are implacable and lasting. Predatory incursions, which hardly attract the notice of the government, bring carnage and devastation, ruin and sorrow, to the fireside. Private property is wasted, and the war is against individuals, rather than the public. The actors in each scene are identified; men and families feel the sense of personal injury, and hatred and revenge are the consequence. But I was not aware that such a state of feeling existed on our own frontier. While these thoughts passed through my mind, we rode forward in silence, which was broken by my inquiring what injury this individual had suffered from the Indians, which could justify him in thus destroying them with impunity.

"Injury enough!" replied my companion: "to tell the plain sentimental truth, he has cause enough to hate them; and many a man that would not dip his own hand in the blood of an Indian, would as soon die as betray him; for few of us could lay our hands upon our hearts and say we would not do the same in his situation."

At this point of the conversation we were joined by several horsemen, who were pursuing the same road with ourselves, and joined us, in accordance with the gregarious habits of the country, which induce men to prefer a larger company to a smaller, on all occasions; and my companion being unwilling to pursue the subject in their hearing, I was unable to learn from him what injury the Indian hater had received, to provoke his sanguinary career of vengeance. Nor did another opportunity occur; for

we soon came to a point where the roads diverging, obliged us to separate, and although my friendly fellow-traveller, with the usual hospitality of the country, invited me to take up my lodgings at his house for the night, I was obliged to decline the invitation, and we parted.

I continued my journey into the northwestern part of Illinois, which was then just beginning to attract the attention of settlers, and contained but few inhabitants. Delighted with this beautiful wilderness, unspoiled by art, and retaining all its native loveliness, and wishing to explore the lands lying between this tract and the Wabash, I determined, on my return, to strike directly across, through a district of country in which there were as yet no settlements. of about one hundred and fifty miles in extent. I hired an Indian guide, who was highly recommended to me, and set out under his protection.

It is not easy to describe the sensations of a traveller, unaccustomed to such scenery, on first beholding the vast prairies, which I was about to explore. Those I had heretofore seen were comparatively small; both are unique, and highly attractive, but as they differ in their features and scenic effect, I shall endeavour to describe them separately.

The smaller prairies, or those in which the plain and woodland alternate frequently, are the most beautiful. The points of woodland which make into them like so many capes or promontories, and the groves which are interspersed like islands, are in these lesser prairies always sufficiently near to be clearly defined to the eye, and to give the scene an interesting variety. We see plains, varying from a few hundred acres to several miles in extent, not perfectly level, but gently rolling or undulating, like the swelling of the ocean when nearly calm. The graceful curve of the surface is seldom broken, except when, here and there, the eye rests upon one of those huge mounds, which are so pleasing to the poet, and so perplexing to the antiquarian. The whole is overspread with grass and flowers, constituting a rich and varied carpet, in which a ground of lively green is ornamented with a profusion of the gaudiest hues, and fringed with a rich border of forest and thicket. Deep recesses in the edge of the timber resemble the bays and inlets of a lake; while occasionally a long

vista, opening far back into the forest, invites the eye to roam off and refresh itself, with the calm beauty of a distant perspective.

The traveller, as he rides along over these smaller prairies, finds his eye continually attracted to the edges of the forest, and his imagination employed in tracing the beautiful outline, and in finding out resemblances between these wild scenes and the most tastefully embellished productions of art. The fairest pleasure-grounds, the noblest parks of European noblemen and princes, where millions have been expended to captivate the senses with Elysian scenes, are but mimic representations, on a reduced scale, of the beauties which are here spread by nature; for here are clumps and lawns, groves and avenues, the tangled thicket, and the solitary tree, the lengthened vista, and the secluded nook, and all the varieties of scenic attraction, but on a plan so extensive, as to offer a wide scope, and an endless succession of changes, to the eye.

There is an air of refinement here, that wins the heart,—even here, where no human residence is seen, where no foot of man intrudes, and where not an axe has ever trespassed on the beautiful domain. It is a wilderness shorn of every savage association, a desert that "blossoms as the rose." So different is the feeling awakened from anything inspired by mountain or woodland scenery, that the instant the traveller emerges from the forest into the prairie, he feels no longer solitary. The consciousness that he is travelling alone, and in a wilderness, escapes him; and he indulges in the same pleasing sensations which are enjoyed by one who, having lost his way, and wandered bewildered among the labyrinths of a savage mountain, suddenly descends into rich and highly cultivated plains, and sees around him the delightful indications of taste and comfort. The gay landscape charms him. He is encompassed by the refreshing sweetness and graceful beauty of the rural scene; and recognises at every step some well-remembered spot, or some ideal paradise in which the fancy had loved to wander, enlarged and beautified, and, as it were, retouched by nature's hand. The clusters of trees so fancifully arranged, the forest outline so gracefully curved, seem to have been disposed by the hand of taste, for the enjoyment of intelligent beings; and so complete is the illusion, that it is difficult

to dispel the belief that each avenue leads to a village, and each grove conceals a splendid mansion.

Widely different was the prospect exhibited by the more northern and central districts of the State. Vast in extent, the distant forest was either beyond the reach of the eye, or was barely discernible in the shapeless outline of blue, faintly impressed on the horizon. As the smaller prairies resembled a series of larger and lesser lakes, so these boundless plains remind one of the ocean waste. Here and there a solitary tree, torn by the wind, stood alone like a dismantled mast in the ocean. As I followed my guide through this lonely region, my sensations were similar to those of the voyager, when his bark is launched upon the sea. Alone, in a wide waste, with my faithful pilot only, I was dependent on him for support, guidance, and protection. With little to diversify the path, and nothing to please the eye but the carpet of verdure, which began to pall upon the sense, a feeling of dreariness crept over me—a desolation of the spirit, such as one feels when crossed in love, or when very drowsy on a hot afternoon, after a full dinner. But these are feelings which, like the sea-sickness of the young mariner, are soon dispelled. I began to find a pleasure in gazing over this immense, unbroken waste, in watching the horizon under the vague hope of meeting a traveller, and in following the deer with my eyes as they galloped off—their agile forms growing smaller and smaller as they receded, until they shrunk into nothing. Sometimes I descried a dark spot at an immense distance, and pointed it out to my companion with a joy like that of the seaman who discovers a sail in the distant speck which floats on the ocean. When such an object happened to be in the direction of our path, I watched it with interest as it rose and enlarged upon the vision—supposing it at one moment to be a solitary horseman, and wondering what manner of man he would turn out to be—at another supposing it might be a wild animal, or a wagon, or a pedestrian; until, after it had seemed to approach for hours, I found it to be a tree.

Nor was I entirely destitute of company; for my Pottowottomie guide proved to be both intelligent and good-humoured; and although his stock of English was but slender, and his habit of taciturnity somewhat confirmed, his conversational powers, when

exerted, were quite respectable. His knowledge of the country was extensive and accurate, so that he was able, not only to choose the best route, but to point out all the localities. When we halted he kindled a fire, spread my pallet, and formed a shelter to protect me from the weather. When we came to a stream which was too deep to ford, he framed a raft to cross me over, with my baggage, while he mounted my horse and plunged into the water. Throughout the journey, his assiduities were as kind and unremitting as all his arrangements were sagacious and considerate. A higher motive than the mere pecuniary reward which he expected for his services governed his actions. He considered himself my companion; not only responsible for my safety, as a matter of contract, but kindly interested for my comfort. A genuine integrity of purpose, a native politeness and manliness of deportment, raised him above the ordinary savage, and rendered him not only a respectable, but an interesting man.

After travelling nearly five days without beholding a human habitation, we arrived at the verge of a settlement on the Wabash. We passed along a rich bottom, covered with huge trees, whose limbs were hung with immense grape vines, and whose thick shade afforded a strong contrast to the scenes we had left behind us, and then ascending a gentle rise, stood on a high bluff bank of the Wabash. A more secluded and beautiful spot has seldom been seen. A small river, with a clear stream, rippling over a rocky bed, meandered round the point on which we stood, and then turning abruptly to the left, was lost among the trees. The opposite shore was low, thickly wooded, and beautifully rich in the variety of mellow hues painted by the autumn sun.

The spot we occupied was a slip of table land, a little higher than the surrounding country. It had once been cleared for cultivation, but was now overgrown with hazel bushes, vines, and briars, while a few tall, leafless trunks, once the proudest oaks of the forest, weather-beaten and blackened by fire, still adhered tenaciously to the soil. A heap of rubbish, intermingled with logs half burnt and nearly rotten, showed the remains of what had once been a chimney, and indicated the spot where a cabin had stood, the residence of human beings—but all else had been

destroyed by time or fire. We gazed on the ruins of a desolated homestead, but many years seemed to have rolled away since it had been inhabited. The clearing had been of small extent; it was now covered with a rank vegetation, which was fast restoring it to the dominion of the wilderness. One spot only, which had probably been the yard in front of the little dwelling, and had been beaten hard, was covered with a smooth green sward, unmixed with weeds or brush; and here we stood gazing at this desolate spot, and that beautiful river. It was but a moment, and neither of us had broken silence, when the crack of a rifle was heard, and my guide, uttering a dismal yell, fell at my feet.

Recovering his senses for an instant, he grasped his gun, partly raised his body, and cast upon me a look of reproach, which I shall never forget; and then, as if satisfied by the concern and alarm of my countenance, and my prompt movement to assist him, he gave me one hand, and pointing with the other towards the woods, exclaimed—"Bad—bad, white man!—take care"—and expired. The aim had been unerring—the bullet had penetrated deep in a vital spot, and life was extinguished in a moment.

I was so much surprised and shocked at this fatal catastrophe, that I stood immoveable, thoughtless of my own safety, mourning over the stout Indian, my kind and worthy guide, who lay weltering in his gore, when I was startled by a slight rustling in the bushes close behind me, and as I turned with an involuntary shudder, a backwoodsman, rifle in hand, issued from the covert. Advancing hastily, without the least appearance of shame or fear, until he came to the corpse, and paying not the slightest attention to me, he stood and gazed sternly at the fallen warrior. It was Monson! The fierce and gloomy picture, which had been impressed so indelibly upon my memory, stood before me in living presentation, his hand imbrued in blood, and his soul freshly steeped in murder.

"There's another of the cursed crew gone to his last account!" he exclaimed. "He is not the first, and he shall not be the last. —It's an old debt, but it shall be paid to the last drop!"

As he spoke, he gnashed his teeth, and his eyes gleamed with the malignity of gratified revenge. Then turning to me, and ob-

serving the deep abhorrence with which I shrunk back, he said gruffly,

"May be, stranger, you don't like this sort of business."

"Wretch — miscreant—murderer! begone! Approach me not," I exclaimed, shrinking back in disgust and terror, and drawing a large pistol from my belt; but, before I was aware, the backwoodsman, with a sudden spring, caught my arm, and wrested the weapon from me; and then remaining perfectly calm, while I was ready to burst with rage, he proceeded:

"This is a poor shooting-iron for a man to have about him—it might do for young men to tote in a settlement, but it's of no use in the woods—no more than a shot-gun."

"Scoundrel!" said I, "you shall repent your violence—"

"Young man!" interrupted he, very coolly, "I am no scoundrel, no more than yourself; you mistake, you do not know me."

"Murderer!" repeated I, "for such I know you to be. My life is in your power, but I dread not your vengeance! If I live, this bloody deed shall not go unpunished!"

While I was thus exhausting myself, in the expression of my rage and horror, the more politic Monson, having possessed himself of the Indian's gun, dropped it, together with my unlucky pistol, on the ground, and placing one foot on them, proceeded deliberately to load his rifle.

"Don't be alarmed, young man," said he, in reply to my last remark, "I shall not hurt a hair of your head. You cannot provoke me to it. I never harmed a Christian man, to my knowledge!"

But although his habitual command of his temper enabled him to treat the matter thus coolly, he was evidently under high excitement, and as he finished loading his piece, he exclaimed, "See here!" Then pointing to the ruins of the cabin, he proceeded in a hurried tone.

"This was my home. Here I built a house with my own labour. With the sweat of my brow I opened this clearing. Here I lived with my wife, my children, and my mother. We worked hard—lived well—and were happy."

His voice became choked; he paused, as if overcome by the

recollections of the past; but after a moment's hesitation, he proceeded with the simple and vehement eloquence of passion:

"I am a rough man, stranger, but I have feelings like other men. My blood is up now, and I will tell you a tale that will explain this deed. One night—it was in the fall—just at this season—I had gathered my corn, ready for shucking, the labour of the year was done, and I was sitting by the fire with my family, with the prospect of plenty and comfort around me—when I heard the Indian yell! I never was a coward, but I knew that sound too well; and when I looked round upon the women and helpless babes, that depended on me for protection, a cold chill ran over me, and my heart seemed to die. I ran to the door, and beheld my stacks in a blaze. I caught up my gun—but in a moment a gang of yelling savages came pouring in at my door, like so many howling wolves. I fired, and one of them fell—I caught up an axe and rushed at them with such fury that I cleared the cabin. The vile varments then set fire to the roof, and we saw the flames spreading around us. What could I do?

"Stranger, you never were in such a fix, and you don't know how a man feels. Here was my poor old mother, and my wife, and my little children, unable to fight, or to escape. I burst open the door, and rushed madly out; but they pushed me back. The yelling wretches were determined to burn us in our house. The blazing timbers came falling among us—my wife hung on my neck, and called on me to save our children—our pious old mother prayed—the savage butchers roared, and laughed, and mocked us. They caught my dog, that we loved as one of the family, hung him, and then threw his carcass among us.

"I grasped my axe, and rushed out again—hoping to beat them back, until the neighbours could be alarmed, and come to our assistance. I killed several of them; but they overpowered me, bound me, and led me up to witness the ruin of all that was dear to me. Wife—children—mother—all, all perished here in the flames before my eyes. They perished in lingering torments—screaming with terror—racked with pain. I saw their agonies—heard their cries—they called on my name. Tied hand and foot, what could I do? Oh Heaven, can I ever forget it!"

The man of sorrows paused in his tragical narrative, overcome

by the tender and terrible recollections that it called forth. He looked wildly around. Tears came to his relief—that hard, ferocious misanthrope, the fountains of whose tenderness seemed to have been long since broken and dried up, melted at the recital of his own griefs. Nature had resumed her sway over him. The pause was but brief; when, brushing the tears from his rough visage, he continued:

"They carried me off a prisoner. I was badly wounded, and so heart-broken, that for three days I was helpless as a child. Then a desire of revenge grew up in my heart, and I got strong. I gnawed the strings they had bound me with, and escaped from them in the night. I thought that God had spared me to be a scourge to the savage. The war with the Indians broke out soon afterwards, and I joined every expedition—I was foremost in every fight; but I could not quench my thirst for the blood of the miscreants. I swore never to forgive them, and when peace came, I continued to make war. I have made it a rule to kill every red-skin that came in my way; my revenge is not yet satisfied, and so long as I have strength to whet my knife on a stone, or ram a ball into my rifle, I shall continue to slay the savage!

"As for this fellow," he continued, "I would not have troubled him, any where else, if I had seen him in your company. I would not harm nor trouble any christian man, especially a stranger. But when he came *here*, setting his cursed feet on *this soil*—stepping over the ruins of my homestead, and the ashes of my family—when he intruded upon me as I sat here alone, thinking over the fate of my poor wife and children, it was not my nater to spare him—I couldn't do it.

"Let us part friends, young man, I have done you no harm; if I have hurt your feelings, I ask your pardon. Pursue your own way, and leave me to mine. If you have a grey-headed mother that prays for you, a wife and children that love you—they will welcome you, and you will be happy. I am alone;—there is none to mourn with me, no one to rejoice at my coming. When all that you cherish is torn from you in one moment, by hellish ruffians, condemn me if you can: but not till then.—That path will lead you to a house."

PETE FEATHERTON.

EVERY country has its superstitions, and will continue to have them, so long as men are blessed with lively imaginations, and while any portion of mankind remain ignorant of the causes of natural phenomena. That which cannot be reconciled with experience, will always be attributed to supernatural influence; and those who know little, will imagine much more to exist than has ever been witnessed by their own senses. I am not displeased with this state of things, for the journey of life would be dull indeed, if those who travel it were confined for ever to the beaten highway, worn smooth by the sober feet of experience. To turnpikes, for our beasts of burden, I have no objection; but I cannot consent to the erection of railways for the mind, even though the architect be "wisdom, whose ways are pleasant, and whose paths are peace." It is sometimes agreeable to stray off into the wilderness which fancy creates, to recline in fairy bowers, and to listen to the murmurs of imaginary fountains. When the beaten road becomes tiresome, there are many sunny spots where the pilgrim may loiter with advantage—many shady paths, whose labyrinths may be traced with delight. The mountain, and the vale, on whose scenery we gaze enchanted, derive new charms, when their deep caverns and gloomy recesses are peopled with imaginary beings.

But above all, the enlivening influence of fancy is felt, when it illumines our firesides, giving to the wings of time, when they grow heavy, a brighter plumage, and a more sprightly motion. There are seasons, when the spark of life within us seems to burn with less than its wonted vigour; the blood crawls heavily through the veins; the contagious chillness seizes on our companions, and the sluggish hours roll painfully along. Something

more than a common impulse is then required to awaken the indolent mind, and give a new tone to the flagging spirits. If necromancy draws her magic circle, we cheerfully enter the ring; if folly shakes her cap and bells, we are amused; a witch becomes an interesting personage, and we are even agreeably surprised by the companionable qualities of a ghost.

We, who live on the frontier, have little acquaintance with imaginary beings. These gentry never emigrate; they seem to have strong local attachments, which not even the charms of a new country can overcome. A few witches, indeed, were imported into New England by the Puritans; but were so badly used, that the whole race seems to have been disgusted with new settlements. With them, the spirit of adventure expired, and the weird women of the present day wisely cling to the soil of the old countries. That we have but few ghosts will not be deemed a matter of surprise by those who have observed how miserably destitute we are of accommodations for such inhabitants. We have no baronial castles, nor ruined mansions;—no turrets crowned with ivy, nor ancient abbeys crumbling into decay; and it would be a paltry spirit, who would be content to wander in the forest, by silent rivers and solitary swamps.

It is even imputed to us as a reproach by enlightened foreigners, that our land is altogether populated with the living descendants of Adam—creatures with thews and sinews, who eat when they are hungry, laugh when they are tickled, and die when they are done living. The creatures of romance, say they, exist not in our territory. A witch, a ghost, or a brownie, perishes in America, as a serpent is said to die the instant it touches the uncongenial soil of Ireland. This is true, only in part. If we have no ghosts, we are not without miracles. Wonders have happened in these United States. Mysteries have occurred in the valley of the Mississippi. Supernatural events have transpired on the borders of "the beautiful stream;" and in order to rescue my country from undeserved reproach, I shall proceed to narrate an authentic history, which I received from the lips of the party principally concerned.

A clear morning had succeeded a stormy night in December; the snow laid ankle-deep upon the ground, and glittered on the

boughs, while the bracing air, and the cheerful sunbeams, invigorated the animal creation, and called forth the tenants of the forest from their warm lairs and hidden lurking-places.

The inmates of a small cabin on the margin of the Ohio were commencing with the sun the business of the day. A stout, raw-boned forester plied his keen axe, and, lugging log after log, erected a pile on the ample hearth, sufficiently large to have rendered the last honours to the stateliest ox. A female was paying her morning visit to the cow-yard, where a numerous herd of cattle claimed her attention. The plentiful breakfast followed; corn-bread, milk, and venison, crowned the oaken board, while a tin coffee-pot of ample dimensions supplied the beverage which is seldom wanting at the morning repast of the substantial American farmer.

The breakfast over, Mr. Featherton reached down a long rifle from the rafters, and commenced certain preparations, fraught with danger to the brute inhabitants of the forest. The lock was carefully examined, the screws tightened, the pan wiped, the flint renewed, and the springs oiled; and the keen eye of the backwoodsman glittered with an ominous lustre, as its glance rested on the destructive engine. His blue-eyed partner, leaning fondly on her husband's shoulder, essayed those coaxing and captivating blandishments, which every young wife so well understands, to detain her husband from the contemplated sport. Every pretext was urged with affectionate pertinacity, which female ingenuity could supply:—the wind whistled bleakly over the hills, the snow lay deep in the valleys, the deer would surely not venture abroad in such bitter cold weather, the adventurous hunter might get his toes frost-bitten, and her own hours would be sadly lonesome in his absence. He smiled in silence at the arguments of his bride, for such she was, and continued his preparations, with the cool, but good-natured determination of one who is not to be turned from his purpose.

He was indeed a person with whom such arguments, except the last, would not be very likely to prevail. Mr. Peter Featherton, or as he was familiarly called by all who knew him, Pete Featherton, was a bold, rattling Kentuckian, of twenty-five, who possessed the characteristic peculiarities of his countrymen—good

and evil—in a striking degree. His red hair and sanguine complexion, announced an ardent temperament; his tall form, and bony limbs, indicated an active frame inured to hardships; his piercing eye and high cheek bones, evinced the keenness and resolution of his mind. He was adventurous, frank, and social—boastful, credulous, illiterate, and at times wonderfully addicted to the marvellous. His imagination was a warm and fruitful soil, in which "tall oaks from little acorns grew," and his vocabulary was overstocked with superlatives. He loved his wife—no mistake about that—but next to her his affections entwined themselves about his gun, and expanded over his horse; he was true to his friends, never missed an election day, turned his back upon a frolic, nor affected to dislike a social glass.

He believed that the best qualities of all countries were combined in Kentucky; and had the most whimsical manner of expressing his national attachments. He was firmly convinced that the battle of the Thames was the most sanguinary conflict of the age—"a raal reg'lar skrimmage,"—and extolled Colonel Dick Johnson as a "severe old colt." He would admit freely that Napoleon was a great genius—Metternich, Castlereagh, "and them fellows" knew "a thing or two," but then they "were no part of a priming to Henry Clay."

When entirely "at himself"—to use his own language—that is to say, when duly sober, Pete was friendly and rational, courteous and considerate, and a better tempered fellow never shouldered a rifle. But he was a social man, who was liable to be "overtaken," and let him get a glass too much, and there was no end to his extravagance. Then it was that his genius bloomed and brought forth strange boasts, and strong oaths, his loyalty to old Kentuck waxed warm, and his faith in his horse, his gun, and his own manhood grew into idolatry. Always bold and self-satisfied, and habitually energetic in the expression of his predelictions, he now became invested with the agreeable properties of the snapping-turtle, the alligator, and the steamboat, and gifted with the most affable and affectionate spirit of auto-biography. It was now that he would dwell upon his own bodily powers and prowess, with the enthusiasm of a devotee, and as the climax of this rhetorical display, would slap his hands together, spring per-

pendicularly into the air, and after uttering a yell worthy of the stoutest Winnebago, swear that he was "the best man in the country," and "could whip his weight in wild cats," "no two ways about it"—he was "not afraid of no man, no way you could fix it;" and finally, after many other extravagancies, he would urge, with no gentle asseveration, his ability to "ride through a crab-apple orchard on a streak of lightning."

In addition to all this, which one would think was enough for any reasonable man, Pete would sometimes brag that he had the best gun, the prettiest wife, the best-looking sister, and the fastest nag, in all Kentuck; and that no man dare say to the contrary. It is but justice to remark, that there was more truth in this last boast, than is usually found on such occasions, and that Pete had good reason to be proud of his horse, his gun, and his lady love.

These, however, were the happy moments, which are few and far between; they were the brilliant inspirations, playing like the lightning in an overheated atmosphere,—gleaming over the turbid stream of existence, as the meteor flashes through the gloom of the night. When the fit was off, Pete was a quiet, good-natured, listless soul, as one would see on a summer's day—strolling about with a grave aspect, a drawling, and a deliberate gait, a stoop of the shoulders, and a kind of general relaxation of the whole outward and inward man—in a state of entire freedom from restraint, reflection, and want, and without any impulse strong enough to call forth his latent manhood—as the panther, with whom he often compared himself, when his appetite for food is sated, sleeps calmly in his lair, or wanders harmlessly through his native thickets.

Our hero was a farmer, or as the very appropriate phrase is, "made a *crap*" on his own land—for besides making a crop he performed but few of the labours of the husbandman. While planting his corn, tending it, and gathering in the harvest, he worked with a good will; but these, thanks to a prolific soil, and a free country, were all his toils, and they occupied not half of the year, the remainder of which was spent in the more manly and gentlemanly employments of hunting, attending elections, and officiating at horse races. He was a rare hand at a "shuck-

ing," a house raising, or a log rolling; merry and strong, he worked like a young giant, and it was worth while to hear the gladsome tones of his clear voice, and the inspiring sound of his loud laugh; while the way he handled the axe, the beauty and keenness of the implement, the weight and precision of the blows, and the gracefulness of the action, were such as are not seen except in the "wilderness," where chopping is an accomplishment as well as the most useful of labours.

It will readily be perceived, that our hunter was not one who could be turned from his purpose by the prospect of danger or fatigue; and a few minutes sufficed to complete his preparations. His feet were cased in moccasins, and his legs in wrappers of dressed deerskin; and he was soon accoutred with a powder horn, quaintly carved all over with curious devices,—an ample pouch with flints, patches, balls, and other "fixens"—and a hunter's knife,—and throwing "Brown Bess," for so he called his rifle, over his shoulder, he sallied forth.

But in passing a store hard by, which supplied the country with gunpowder, whiskey, and other necessaries, as well as with the luxuries of tea, sugar, coffee, calico, calomel, and chandlery, he was hailed by one of the neighbours, who invited him to "light off and take something." Pete said he had "no occasion," but "rather than be nice," he dismounted, and joined a festive circle, among whom the cup was circulating freely. Here he was soon challenged to swap rifles, and being one of those who could not "stand a banter," he bantered back again, without the least intention of parting with his favourite weapon. Making offers, like a skilful diplomatist, which he knew would not be accepted, and feigning great eagerness to accede to any reasonable proposition, while inwardly resolved to reject all, he magnified the perfections of Brown Bess.

"She can do any thing but talk," said he. "If she had legs she could hunt by herself. It is a pleasure to *tote* her—I naterrally believe there is not a rifle south of Green river, that can throw a ball so far, or so true. I can put a bullet in that tree, down the road, a mile off."

"You can't do it, Pete—I'll bet a treat for the whole company."

"No"—said the hunter. "I could do it—but I don't want to strain my gun."

These discussions consumed much time and much whiskey—for the rule on such occasions is, that he who rejects an offer to trade, must treat the company, and thus every point in the negociation costs a pint of spirits.

At length, bidding adieu to his companions, Pete struck into the forest—it was getting late, and he "must look about pretty peart," he said, to get a venison before night. Lightly crushing the snow beneath his active feet, he beat up the coverts, and traversed all the accustomed haunts of the deer. He mounted every hill, and descended into every valley—not a thicket escaped the penetrating glance of his practised eye. Fruitless labour! not a deer was to be seen. Pete marvelled at this unusual circumstance, as the deer were very abundant in this neighbourhood, and no one knew better where to look for them than himself.

But what surprised him still more, was, that the woods were less familiar to him than formerly. He knew them "like a book." He thought he was acquainted with every tree within ten miles of his cabin; but now, although he certainly had not wandered so far, some of the objects around him seemed strange, while others again were faintly recognized; and there was, altogether, a singular confusion in the character of the scenery, which was partly familiar, and partly new; or rather, in which many of the component parts were separately well known, but were so mixed up and changed in relation to each other, as to baffle even the knowledge of an expert woodsman.

The more he looked, the more he was bewildered. Had such a thing been possible, he would have thought himself a lost man. He came to a stream which had heretofore rolled to the west, but now its course pointed to the east; and the shadows of the tall trees, which, according to Pete's experience and philosophy, ought at noon to fall towards the north, all pointed to the south. He looked at his right and his left hands, somewhat puzzled to know which was which; then scratched his head—but scratching the head, though a good thing in its way, will not always get a man out of a scrape. He cast his eye upon his own shadow,

which had never deceived him—when lo! a still more extraordinary phenomenon presented itself. It was travelling round him like the shade on a dial—only a great deal faster, as it veered round to all the points of the compass in the course of a single minute. Mr. Peter Featherton was "in a bad fix."

It was very evident too, from the dryness of the snow, and the brittleness of the twigs, which snapped off as he brushed his way through the thickets, that the weather was intensely cold; yet the perspiration was rolling in large drops from his brow. He stopped at a clear spring, and thrusting his hands into the cold water, attempted to carry a portion of it to his lips; but the element recoiled and hissed, as if his hands and lips had been composed of red hot iron. Pete felt quite puzzled when he reflected on all these contradictions in the aspect of nature; and began to consider what act of wickedness he had been guilty of, which could have rendered him so hateful, that the deer fled at his approach, the streams turned back, and the shadows fell the wrong way, or danced round their centre.

He began to grow alarmed, and would have liked to turn back, but was ashamed to betray such weakness, even to himself; and being naturally bold, he resolutely kept on his way. At last, to his great joy he espied the tracks of deer imprinted on the snow; they were fresh signs—and, dashing upon the trail, with the alacrity of a well-trained hound, he pursued, in hopes of soon overtaking the game. Presently he discovered the tracks of a man, who had struck the same trail in advance of him, and supposing it to be one of his neighbours, he quickened his pace, as well to gain a companion, which in the present state of his feelings he so much needed, as to share the spoil with his fellow hunter. Indeed, in his present situation and condition of mind, Pete thought he would be willing to give half of what he was worth, for the sight of a human face.

"I don't like the signs, no how," said he, casting a rapid glance around him; and then throwing his eyes downwards at his own shadow, which had ceased its rotatory motion, and was now swinging backward and forward like a pendulum—"I don't like the signs, no way they can be fixed."

"You are not scared, are you, Pete?" he continued, smiling at the oddity of such a question.

"Oh no, bless your heart, Mr. Featherton, I'm not scared—I'm not of that breed of dogs—there's no back out in me—but then I must say—to speak sentimentally—that I feel sort o' jubus—I do so. But I'll soon see whether other people's shadows act the fool like mine."

Upon further observation, there appeared to be something peculiar in the human tracks before him, which were evidently made by a pair of feet which were not fellows—or were *odd fellows*—for one of them was larger than the other. As there was no person in the settlement who was thus deformed, Pete began to doubt whether it might not be the devil, who in borrowing shoes to conceal his cloven hoofs might have got those that did not match. He stopped, and scratched his head, as many a learned philosopher has done, when placed between the horns of a dilemma less perplexing than that which now vexed the spirit of our hunter. It was said long ago, that there is a tide in the affairs of men; and although our good friend Pete had never seen this sentiment in black and white, yet it is one of those truths, which are written in the heart of every reasonable being, and was only copied by the poet, from the great book of nature, a source from which he was a great borrower. It readily occurred to Pete on this occasion; and as he had enjoyed through life an uninterrupted tide of success, he reflected whether the stream of fortune might not have changed its course, like the brooks he had crossed, whose waters, for some sinister reason, seemed to be crawling up-hill.

He stopped, drew out his handkerchief, and wiped the perspiration from his brow. "This thing of being scared," said he, "makes a man feel mighty queer—the way it brings the sweat out is curious!" And again it occurred to him, that it was incumbent on him to see the end of the adventure, as otherwise he would show a want of that courage, which he had been taught to consider as the chief of the cardinal virtues.

"I can't back out," said he, "I never was raised to it, no how; and if the devil's a mind to hunt in this range, he shan't have all the game."

Then falling into the sentimental vein, as one naturally does

from the heroic: "Here's this hankercher, that my Polly hemmed for me, and marked the two first letters of my name on it—P. for Pete and F. for Featherton—would she do the like of that for a coward? Could I ever look in her pretty face again, if I was mean enough to be scared? No—I'll go ahead—let what will come."

He soon overtook the person in advance of him, who, as he had suspected, was a perfect stranger. He had halted and was quietly seated on a log, gazing at the sun, when our hunter approached, and saluted him with the usual hearty, "How are you, stranger?" The person addressed made no reply, but continued to gaze at the sun, as if totally unconscious that any other individual was present. He was a small, thin, old man, with a grey beard of about a month's growth, and a long sallow melancholy visage, while a tarnished suit of snuff-coloured clothes, cut after the quaint fashion of some religious sect, hung loosely about his shrivelled person.

Our bold backwoodsman, somewhat awed, now coughed, threw the butt end of his gun heavily upon the frozen ground, and, still failing to elicit any attention, quietly seated himself on the other end of the log occupied by the stranger. Both remained silent for some minutes—Pete with open mouth, and glaring eyeballs, observing his companion with mute astonishment, and the latter looking at the sun.

"It's a warm day, this," said Pete, at length, passing his hand across his brow, as he spoke, and sweeping off the heavy drops of perspiration that hung there. But receiving no answer, he began to get nettled. He thought himself not civilly treated. His native assurance, which had been damped by the mysterious deportment of the person who sat before him, revived. "One man's as good as another"—thought he; and screwing up his courage to the sticking point, he arose, approached the silent man, and slapping him on the back, exclaimed—

"Well, stranger! don't the sun look mighty droll away out there in the north?"

As the heavy hand fell on his shoulder, the stranger slowly turned his face towards Pete, who recoiled several paces,—then rising without paying the abashed hunter any further attention,

he began to pursue the trail of the deer. Pete prepared to follow, when the other turning upon him with a stern glance, enquired:

"Who are you tracking?"

"Not you," replied the hunter, whose alarm had subsided when the enemy began to retreat; and whose pride, piqued by the abruptness with which he had been treated, enabled him to assume his usual boldness of manner.

"Why do you follow this trail, then?"

"I trail deer."

"You must not pursue them further, they are mine!"

The sound of the stranger's voice broke the spell, which had hung over Peter's natural impudence, and he now shouted—

"*Your* deer! that's droll too! who ever heard of a man claiming the deer in the woods!"

"Provoke me not,—I tell you they are mine."

"Well, now—you're a comical chap! Why stranger,—the deer are wild! They're jist nateral to the woods here, the same the timber. You might as well say the wolves and the painters are yours, and all the rest of the wild varments."

"The tracks you behold here, are those of wild deer, undoubtedly—but they are mine. I routed them from their bed, and am driving them home."

"Home—where is your home?" inquired Pete, at the same time casting an inquisitive glance at the stranger's feet.

To this home question no reply was given, and Pete, fancying that he had got the best of the altercation, pushed his advantage, —adding sneeringly—

"Could'nt you take a pack or two of wolves along? We can spare you a small gang. It is mighty wolfy about here."

"If you follow any further it is at your peril," said the stranger.

"You don't reckon I'm to be skeered, do you? If you do, you are barking up the wrong tree. There's no back out in none of my breed, no how. You must'nt come over them words agin, stranger."

"I repeat ——"

"You had best not repeat—I allow no man to do that to me"—

interrupted the irritated woodsman, "You must not imitate the like of that. I'm Virginy born, and Kentucky raised, and drot my skin, if I take the like of that from any man—no, Sir!"

"Desist, rash man, from altercation—I despise your threats!"

"The same to you, Sir!

"I tell you what, stranger!" continued Pete, endeavouring to imitate the coolness of the other, "as to the vally of a deer or two—I don't vally them to the tantamount of this here cud of tobacco; but I'm not to be backed out of my tracks. So keep off, stranger—don't come fooling about me. I might hurt you. I feel mighty wolfy about the head and shoulders. Keep off, I say, or you might run agin a snag."

With this the hunter "squared himself, and sot his triggers," fully determined either to hunt the disputed game, or be vanquished in combat. To his surprise, the stranger, without appearing to notice his preparations, advanced and blew with his breath upon his rifle.

"Your gun is charmed!" said he. "From this day forward you will kill no deer."

So saying, that mysterious old man, with the most provoking coolness, resumed his way; while Pete remained bewildered; and fancied that he smelt brimstone.

Pete Featherton remained a moment or two lost in confusion. He then thought he would pursue the stranger, and punish him as well for his threats, as for the insult intended to his gun; but a little reflection induced him to change his decision. The confident manner in which that singular being had spoken, together with a kind of vague assurance in his own mind, that the spell had really taken effect, so unmanned and stupefied him, that he quietly "took the back track," and strode homewards. He had not gone far, when he saw a fine buck, half concealed among the hazel bushes which beset his path, and resolved to know at once how matters stood between Brown Bess and the pretended conjurer, he took a deliberate aim, fired,—and away bounded the buck unharmed!

With a heavy heart, our mortified forester re-entered his own dwelling, and replaced his degraded weapon in its accustomed berth under the rafters.

"You have been long gone," said his wife, "but where is the venison you promised me?"

Pete was constrained to confess that he had shot nothing.

"That is strange!" said the lady, "I never knew you fail before."

Pete framed twenty excuses. He had felt unwell—his gun was out of fix—it was a bad day for hunting—the moon was not in the right place—and there were no deer stirring.

Had not Pete been a very young husband, he would have known that the vigilant eye of a wife is not to be decived by feigned apologies. Female curiosity never sleeps; and the love of a devoted wife is the most sincere and the most absorbing of human passions. Pretty Mrs. Featherton saw, at a glance, that something had happened to her helpmate, more than he was willing to confess; and being quite as tenacious as himself, in her reluctance against being "backed out of her fracks," she determined to bring her inferior moiety to auricular confession, and advanced firmly to her object, until Pete was compelled to own, "That he believed Brown Bess was, somehow—sort o'—charmed."

"Now, Mr. Featherton!" remonstrated his sprightly bride, leaning fondly on his shoulder, and parting the long red locks on his forehead—"are you not ashamed to tell me such a tale as that? Charmed indeed! Ah well, I know how it is. You have been down at the store, shooting for half pints!"

"No, indeed—" replied the husband emphatically, "I wish I may be kissed to death, if I've pulled a trigger for a drop of liquor this day."

Ah, Peter—what a sad evasion was that! Surely the adversary when he blew his breath—sadly sulphureous of smell—upon thy favourite gun, breathed into thee the spirit of lying, of which he is the father. Mrs. Featherton saw farther into a millstone thán he was aware of—but she kept her own counsel.

"I believe you, Peter,—you did not *shoot* for it—but do now—that's a dear good soul!—tell me where you have been, and what has happened? You are not well—or something is wrong—for never did Pete Featherton and Brown Bess fail to get a venison any day in the year."

Soothed by this well-timed compliment, and not unwilling to have the aid of counsel in this trying emergency, and to apply to his excited spirit the balm of conjugal sympathy, Pete narrated minutely to his wife all the particulars of his meeting with the mysterious stranger. The lady was all attention; but was as much wonder-struck as Pete himself. She had heard of spells being cast upon guns, and so had Peter—often—but then neither of them had ever known such a case, in their own experience; and although she had recipes for pickling fruit, and preserving life, and preventing various maladies, she knew of no remedy which would remove the spell from a rifle. As she could give no sage advice, she prescribed sage tea, bathing the feet, and going to bed, and Pete submitted passively to all this—not perceiving, however, how it could possibly affect his gun.

When Pete awoke the next morning, the events which we have described appeared to him as a dream; indeed, he had been dreaming of them all night, and it was somewhat difficult to unravel the tangled thread of recollection, so as to separate the realities of the day from the illusions of the pillow. But resolving to know the truth, he seized his gun, and hastened to the woods. Alas! every experiment produced the same vexatious result. The gun was charmed! "No two ways about that!" It was too true to make a joke of; and the hunter stalked harmlessly through the forest.

Day after day he went forth, and returned with no better success. The very deer became sensible of his inoffensiveness, and would raise their heads, and gaze mildly at him as he passed; or throw back their antlers, and bound carelessly across his path. Day after day, and week after week, passed without bringing any change; and Pete began to feel very ridiculously. A harmless man—a fellow with a gun, that could not shoot! he could imagine no situation more miserable than his own. To walk through the woods, to see the game, to come within gun-shot of it, and yet to be unable to kill a deer, seemed to be the height of human wretchedness. He felt as if he was "the meanest kind of a white man." There was a littleness, an insignificance, attached to the idea of not being able to kill a deer, which, to Pete's mind, was downright disgrace. More than once, he was tempted to

throw the gun into the river; but the excellence of the weapon, and the recollection of former exploits, restrained him; and he continued to stroll through the woods, firing now and then at a fat buck, under the hope that the charm would expire some time or other, by its own limitation; but the fat bucks continued to treat him with a familiarity amounting to contempt, and to frisk fearlessly in his path.

At length Pete bethought him of a celebrated Indian doctor, who lived at no great distance. We do not care to say much of doctors, as they are a touchy race—and shall therefore touch upon this one briefly. An Indian doctor is not necessarily a descendant of the Aborigines. The title, it is true, originates from the confidence which many of our countrymen repose in the medical skill of the Indian tribes. But to make an Indian doctor a red skin is by no means indispensable. To have been taught by a savage, to have seen one, or, at all events, to have heard of one, is all that is necessary, to enable any individual to practise this lucrative and popular branch of the healing art. Neither is any great proficiency in literature requisite; it is important only to be expert in spell-ing. Your Indian doctor is one who practises without a diploma—the only degree his exhibits, is a high degree of confidence. He neither nauseates the stomach with odious drugs, nor mars the fair proportions of nature with the sanguinary lancet. He believes in the sympathy which is supposed to exist between the body and the mind, which, like the two arms of a syphon, always preserve a corresponding relation to each other; and the difference between him and the regular physician—called in the vernacular of the frontier, the marcury doctor—is that they operate at different points of the same figure—the one practising on the immaterial spirit, while the other grapples with the bones and muscles. I cannot determine which is right; but must award to the Indian doctor at least this advantage, that his art is the most widely beneficial; for while your doctor of medicine restores a lost appetite, his rival can, in addition, recover a strayed or stolen horse. If the former can bring back the faded lustre to a fair maiden's cheeks, the latter remove the spell from a churn or a rifle. The dyspeptic and the dropsical may hie to the disciples of Rush and Wistar, but the

crossed-in-love, and lack-a-daysical, find a charm in the practitioner who professes to follow nature.

To a sage of this order, did Pete disclose his misfortune, and apply for relief. The doctor examined the gun, and looked wise; and having measured the calibre of the bore, with a solemnity which was as imposing as it was unquestionably proper on so serious an occasion, directed the applicant to come again.

At the appointed time, the hunter returned, and received from the wise man two balls, one of pink, the other of a silver hue. The doctor instructed him to load his piece with one of these bullets, which he pointed out, and proceed through the woods to a certain secluded hollow, at the head of which was a spring. Here he would see a white fawn, at which he was to shoot. It would be wounded, but would escape, and he was to pursue its trail, until he found a buck, which he was to kill with the other ball. If he accomplished all this accurately, the charm would be broken; but success would depend upon his having faith, keeping up his courage, and firing with precision.

Pete, who was well acquainted with all the localities, carefully pursued the route which had been indicated, treading lightly along, sometimes elated with the prospect of speedily breaking the spell, and restoring his beloved gun to usefulness and respectability—sometimes doubting the skill of the doctor—admiring the occult knowledge of men who could charm and uncharm deadly weapons—and ashamed alternatively of his doubts and his belief. At length he reached the lonely glen; and his heart bounded with delight, as he beheld the white fawn quietly grazing by the fountain. The ground was open, and he was unable to get within his usual distance, before the fawn raised her delicate head, looked timidly around, and snuffed the breeze, as if conscious of the approach of danger. Pete trembled with excitement—his heart palpitated. It was a long shot and a bad chance—but he could not advance a step further, without danger of starting the game—and Brown Bess could carry a ball farther than that, with fatal effect.

"Luck's a lord," said he, as he drew the gun up to his face, took a deliberate aim, and pulled the trigger. The fawn bounded aloft at the report, and then darted away through the brush, while the hunter hastened to examine the signs. To his great joy he

found the blood profusely scattered; and now flushed with the confidence of success, he stoutly rammed down the other ball, and pursued the trail of the wounded fawn. Long did he trace the crimson drops upon the snow, without beholding the promised victim. Hill after hill he climbed, vale after vale he passed—searching every thicket with penetrating eyes; and he was about to renounce the chase, the wizard, and the gun, when lo!—directly in his path, stood a noble buck, with numerous antlers branching over his fine head!

"Aha! my jolly fellow! I've found you at last!" exclaimed the delighted hunter, "you are the very chap I've been looking after. Your blood shall wipe off the disgrace from my charming Bess, that never hung fire, burned priming, nor missed the mark in her born days, till that vile abominable varment blowed his brimstone breath on her! Here goes—"

He shot the buck. The spell was broken—Brown Bess was restored to favour, and Pete Featherton never again wanted venison.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

(Page 11.)

THIS incident is copied from real life. An adventurous friend of mine, who made an excursion to the Rocky Mountains, for health and recreation, and to whom I am indebted for most of the particulars descriptive of the Flatheads, contained in this article, received from Incillo himself, a narrative of the adventures of a young warrior of his tribe, which I have followed so far as it went. It was related by that chief, in reply to questions in regard to the education of the Flathead youth. He told of a lad who was desirous to be admitted among the warriors, and who was directed by Incillo to undergo two trials, similar to those I have described. The first was to return from a distant hunting camp, to the main encampment of the tribe, which he was to enter and leave without detection, and to abstract by stealth from the tent of an individual certain articles. The second was to steal a noted horse from a distinguished Blackfoot warrior. Both exploits were successfully performed. The horse was stolen back again by the Blackfeet; and changed hands, I think, several times, in the course of an exciting rivalry between the two tribes, for the palm of superiority, in the nomadic accomplishment of stealing horses.

II.

(Page 17.)

A tradition has been current for several years past, among the Indians and traders, in relation to a very remarkable horse, supposed to be the leader of a herd of these animals, roaming on the Western plains. Many profess to have seen the "White Steed," and describe him as a horse of splendid figure and action, and of such surpassing fleetness, sagacity, and courage, that he baffles every attempt to capture him. The extraordinary beauty of this noble steed, and the exquisite gracefulness of his movements, as he plays round the grazing drove, or scours the prairie before the eager pursuers, have ren-

dered him an object of intense interest to the wild hunters. Travellers speak of the existence of this fine creature as an admitted fact; and we tell the tale as it was told to us; but as others may have used the same tale, and we have no ambition to acquire fame as a taker of other men's horses, we have made ours a horse of a different colour.

III.

(Page 18.)

Incillo is a great hunter of the buffalo, a successful tamer of the wild horse, and one of the most expert horsemen living. He is friendly to the white people, and is considered by the traders as an honest man, and a person of excellent disposition, and capacity. A Roman Catholic priest, who visited this tribe within the last four or five years, induced the chief and a considerable number of the people, to embrace Christianity. In the case of the chief, however, a rather whimsical difficulty occurred. After he had been a convert some time, the priest admonished him that he had neglected the duty of daily confession; but Incillo defended himself on the ground that it was necessary for him as a chief and ruler, to be the exemplar of his people, and to stand, in their eyes, above reproach, and that he could not, without forfeiting their respect and obedience, acknowledge himself every day to be a disobedient subject, a bad man, and an imperfect christian.

IV.

(Page 24.)

In this, as well as in all the details of our fiction, we have endeavoured to adapt our descriptions to the actual forms of Indian life, so that the scenes presented shall be true pictures of that curious state of human existence.

V.

(Page 29.)

An incident of this kind is related, as having actually occurred. One of those melodious and powerful songsters, who sometimes pour out their wild notes in the silence of the night, was heard to warble his sweet song, from the top of a tall tree, over the grave of a distinguished warrior, around which a mourning train of savage men stood in silence, at the midnight hour. A coincidence so happy could hardly fail to attract the attention of a superstitious

people, and they gave to it the poetic interpretation which I have adopted. I cannot now remember the occasion, or the authority from which I received it.

VI.

(Page 30.)

It is customary among the Northwestern tribes, to expose the bodies of the dead upon a high platform, until the flesh decays, after which the skeleton is buried. This will account for what would otherwise seem inconsistent—the recent interment of the Blackfoot chief, so long after his decease. This custom also sheds light upon the peculiar phraseology used by the Indians in speaking of their dead: "*the bones* of their fathers." It is in fact to the *bones* that the last offices of respect are paid.

VII.

(Page 32.)

The principal part in this legend, was published some years ago, by an anonymous writer, in a Pittsburgh newspaper, who gave the name of the late venerated Major Denny as his authority. We had heard something of the story before, though in a less authentic form; and upon conversing with our distinguished friend, General Harrison, he not only confirmed, but corrected the writer as to the place, where the treaty must have been held. It was not at Cincinnati, as was alleged, but at North Bend, that Clarke held the treaty referred to. The first military post was at the latter place, and it was there that Judge Symmes intended to establish his city; but accident, or the superior advantages of the site of Cincinnati, induced a number of persons to cluster about this spot, and the Fort was brought here.

VIII.

(Page 36.)

George Rogers Clarke was a remarkable man. He was one of the noblest of the sons of Virginia, so prolific in heroes and statesmen. His talents were of a high order, his military genius unsurpassed by that of any man of his age. He seems to have possessed a number of qualifications that are but rarely combined in the character of one person, and a versatility not often found united with a sound judgment. To great quickness of perception, and clearness of mind, Clarke added a solidity of judgment, a boldness of thought,

and a vigour of action, that carried every thing before them. The boldness of his designs, the promptness of his decisions, the rapidity of his movements, surprised his friends as well as his enemies, inspiring fear on the one hand, and confidence on the other. It was remarked of him that his actions always had the appearance of rashness, until the results were developed, and then they seemed to have been conceived in consummate prudence, and profound sagacity. He was very successful in his military enterprises, some of which were brilliant. His campaign against Kaskaskia and Vincennes, has seldom been excelled; there was a boldness, a completeness, an unity, in the plan, a coolness and brilliancy in the execution that would have done honour to the most accomplished leader. His appearance and manners were prepossessing and commanding. On ordinary occasions his address is said to have been dignified and winning, but in his moments of anger there was a sternness in his aspect that was terrific. Hence his sway over common minds, which were alternately allured by his cordiality, and overawed by his energy. Among the Indians his name was powerful. His rapid marches, and his successes, in his campaigns against him, made him extensively known and feared, while those who approached him in friendship, were won by his manners.

IX.

(Page 37.)

Another amusing anecdote is told illustrative of the times and the men. An Indian chief, who had been in the hostile ranks, was in the habit after peace of visiting Clarke, and became much attached to him. Having both been active leaders in the then recent wars, their conversation naturally turned upon those events—the more especially as the native warrior's fund of conversational lore must have been very limited. On one occasion they amused themselves with a kind of friendly bragging over each other, in which each enumerated the victories of his own nation. Using the personal pronoun to designate their respective nations, the conversation ran thus: "I beat you at such a place." "I made you run at such a place." "I cut you to pieces at such a place." "That was very well done, but nothing to compare to the trick I played you, at such a place." At length the Indian, in an exulting manner, referred to the lamentable massacre at the Blue Lick. "I beat you there, badly,—you never gained such a victory as that." "No," replied Clarke, "perhaps we never did, but you won that by luck"—and then rapidly describing the ground and the battle, which both of them were familiar with, though neither were in the engagement, he added, "Now suppose that instead of fighting you here, on the edge of the water, we had sent a party round here, and attacked you in this direction, what would have become of you?" The chief considered for a moment, and then acknowledged himself beaten. "I can't fight with you any more, General," said he. "You too much big captain for me."

X.

(Page 43.)

These Indians are properly called the Omawhaws, but the name is more commonly spoken and written in the abbreviated form in the text. I have therefore used both forms.

XI.

(Page 47.)

The grave of Blackbird is well known to all travellers. In sketching the character of that chief I have adhered strictly to the account given of him in *Long's First Expedition*, where a very interesting history is given of him and his people. I have added a few particulars from other sources equally authentic. The pathetic story of Menae, is also founded on fact. The real story is in the work above quoted.

XII

(Page 74.)

This anecdote is also founded on fact.

XIII.

(Page 87.)

The characters in this tale are fictitious, and the plot itself is imaginary. The descriptions are intended to convey accurate ideas of the savage life, as it exists on the Northwestern border of the United States. I have relied chiefly on the authority of Gov. Cass, Schoolcraft, Long, and the writer of Tanner's Narrative.

XIV.

(Page 101.)

This incident is taken from real life. The original may be found in a very curious passage in Tanner's Narrative, an admirable work, which abounds in singular and valuable information in regard to Indian life and manners. It is

related there, that the adopted mother of Tanner, who was a Kentuckian captured in childhood, and reared among the Chippeways, resorted to an expedient similar to that described in the text. Her son, and adopted son, almost famished, had become despondent, and were sunk in a state of hopeless lethargy. She went out in the night, prayed for some hours alone, and then returning to the lodge, informed the young men that the Great Spirit had pointed out to her where to find game, and with much persuasion induced them to follow her to the place, where they found the bed of a hybernating bear which supplied an abundance of food. I have no doubt of the truth of the relation.

XV.

(Page 111.)

In Long's Second Expedition we have an account of a place passed by the travellers, which the Indians avoided in consequence of its having been the scene of a fratricide.

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pious woman, such as we have known and loved. Such books make us familiar with the past, not merely cognizant of it. There is the same difference between them and statelier records, as between Macready's Coriolanus and Placide's Grandfather Whitehead.

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VI. & IX.

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